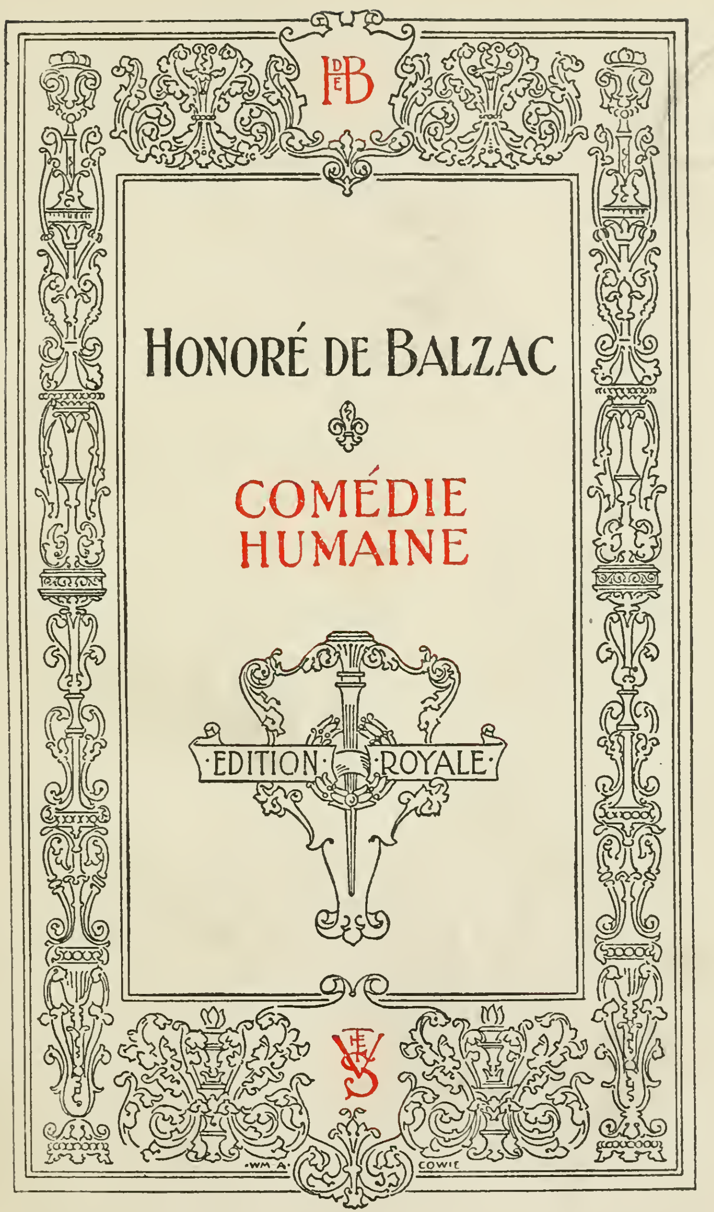



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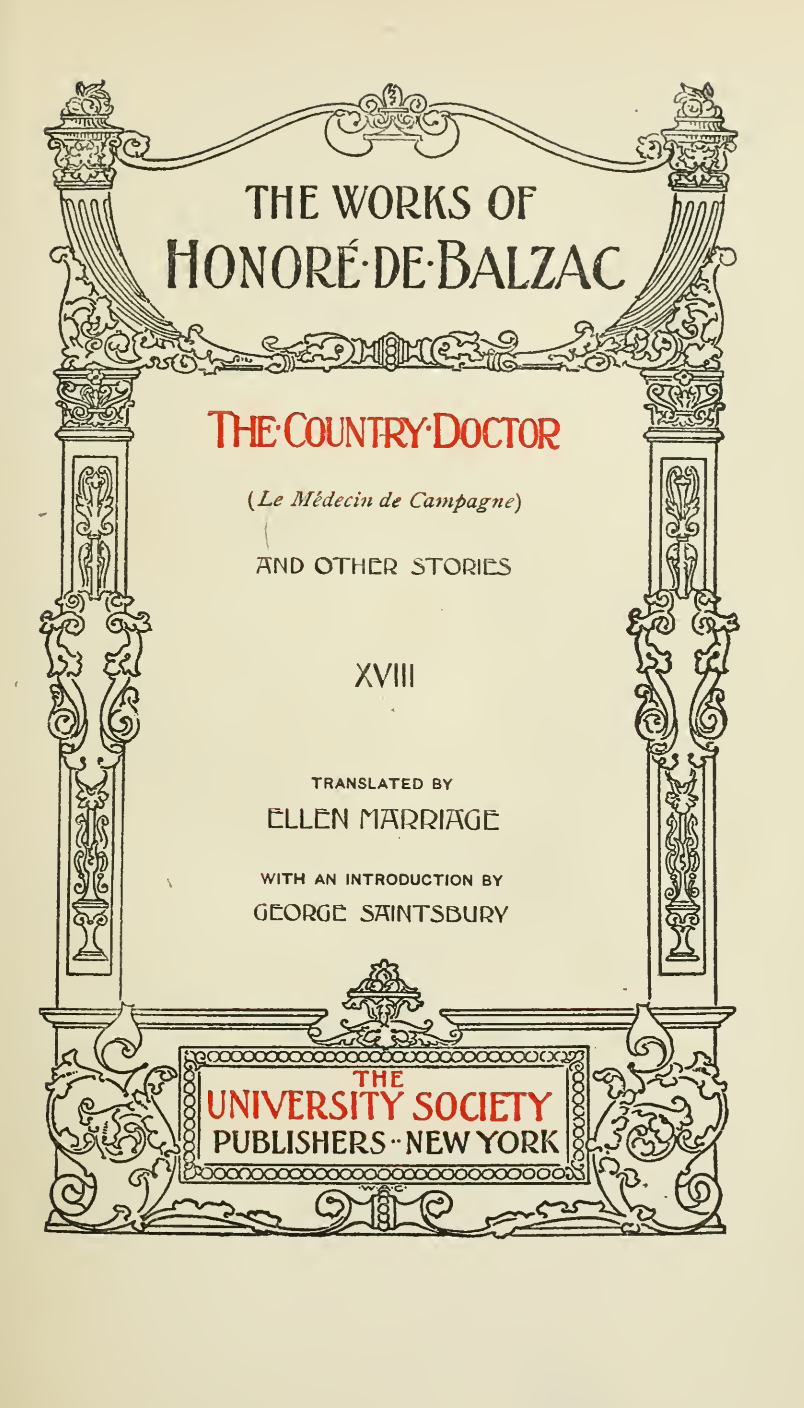
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"Aha!" said the doctor, putting a foot in the stirrup, "a husband for you perhaps"

—The Country Doctor, page 122





THE WORKS OF

HONORÉ·DE·BALZAC

THE·COUNTRY·DOCTOR

(*Le Médecin de Campagne*)

AND OTHER STORIES

XVIII

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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INTRODUCTION

In hardly any of his books, with the possible exception of *Eugénie Grandet,* does Balzac seem to have taken a greater interest than in *Le Médecin de Campagne;* and the fact of this interest, together with the merit and intensity of the book in each case, is, let it be repeated, a valid argument against those who would have it that there was something essentially sinister both in his genius and in his character.

The *Médecin de Campagne* was an early book; it was published in 1833, a date of which there is an interesting mark in the selection of the name "Evelina," the name of Madame Hanska, whom Balzac had just met, for the lost Jansenist love of Benassis; and it had been on the stocks for a considerable time. It is also noteworthy, as lying almost entirely outside the general scheme of the *Comédie Humaine* as far as personages go. Its chief characters in the remarkable, if not absolutely impeccable, *répertoire* of MM. Cerfberr and Christophe (they have, a rare thing with them, missed Agathe the forsaken mistress) have no references appended to their articles, except to the book itself; and I cannot remember that any of the more generally pervading *dramatis personæ* of the Comedy makes even an incidental appearance here. The book is as isolated as its scene and subject—I might have added, as its own beauty, which is singular and unique, nor wholly easy to give a critical account of. The transformation of the *crétin*-haunted desert into a happy valley is in itself

a commonplace of the preceding century; it may be found several times over in Marmontel's *Contes Moraux,* as well as in other places. The extreme minuteness of detail, effective as it is in the picture of the house and elsewhere, becomes a little tedious even for well-tried and well-affected readers, in reference to the exact number of cartwrights and harness-makers, and so forth; while the modern reader pure and simple, though schooled to endure detail, is schooled to endure it only of the ugly. The minor characters and episodes, with the exception of the wonderful story or legend of Napoleon by Private Goguelat, and the private himself, are neither of the first interest, nor always carefully worked out: La Fosseuse, for instance, is a very tantalizingly unfinished study, of which it is nearly certain that Balzac must at some time or other have meant to make much more than he has made; Genestas, excellent as far as he goes, is not much more than a type; and there is nobody else in the foreground at all except the Doctor himself.

It is, however, beyond all doubt in the very subordination of these other characters to Benassis, and in the skilful grouping of the whole as background and adjunct to him, that the appeal of the book as art consists. From that point of view there are grounds for regarding it as the finest of the author's work in the simple style, the least indebted to superadded ornament or to mere variety. The dangerous expedient of a *récit,* of which the eighteenth-century novelists were so fond, has never been employed with more successful effect than in the confession of Benassis, at once the climax and the centre of the story. And one thing which strikes us immediately about this confession is the universality of its humanity and its strange freedom from merely national limi-

tations. To very few French novelists—to few even of those who are generally credited with a much softer mould and a much purer morality than Balzac is popularly supposed to have been able to boast—would inconstancy to a mistress have seemed a fault which could be reasonably punished, which could be even reasonably represented as having been punished in fact, by the refusal of an honest girl's love in the first place. Nor would many have conceived as possible, or have been able to represent in lifelike colors, the lifelong penance which Benassis imposes on himself. The tragic end, indeed, is more in their general way, but they would seldom have known how to lead up to it.

In almost all ways Balzac has saved himself from the dangers incident to his plan in this book after a rather miraculous fashion. The Goguelat myth may seem disconnected, and he did as a matter of fact once publish it separately; yet it sets off (in the same sort of felicitous manner of which Shakespeare's clown-scenes and others are the capital examples in literature) both the slightly matter-of-fact details of the beatification of the valley and the various minute sketches of places and folk, and the almost superhuman goodness of Benassis, and his intensely and piteously human suffering and remorse. It is like the red cloak in a group; it lights, warms, inspirits the whole picture.

And perhaps the most remarkable thing of all is the way in which Balzac in this story, so full of goodness of feeling, of true religion (for if Benassis is not an ostensible practiser of religious rites, he avows his orthodoxy in theory, and more than justifies it in practice), has almost entirely escaped the sentimentality *plus* unorthodoxy of similar work in the eighteenth century, and the sentimentality *plus* ortho-

doxy of similar work in the nineteenth. Benassis no doubt plays Providence in a manner and with a success which it is rarely given to mortal man to achieve; but we do not feel either the approach to sham, or the more than approach to gush, with which similar handling on the part of Dickens too often affects some of us. The sin and the punishment of the Doctor, the thoroughly human figures of Genestas and the rest, save the situation from this and other drawbacks. We are not in the Cockaigne of perfectibility, where Marmontel and Godwin disport themselves; we are in a very practical place, where time-bargains in barley are made, and you pay the respectable, if not lavish, board of ten francs per day for entertainment to man and beast.

And yet, explain as we will, there will always remain something inexplicable in the appeal of such a book as the *Médecin de Campagne.* This helps, and that, and the other; we can see what change might have damaged the effect, and what have endangered it altogether. We must, of course, acknowledge that as it is there are *longueurs,* intrusion of Saint Simonian jargon, passages of *galimatias* and of preaching. But of what in strictness produces the good effect we can only say one thing, and that is, it was the genius of Balzac working as it listed and as it knew how to work.

The book was originally published by Mme. Delaunay in September 1833 in two volumes and thirty-six chapters with headings. Next year it was republished in four volumes by Werdet, and the last fifteen chapters were thrown together into four. In 1836 it reappeared with dedication and date, but with the divisions further reduced to seven; being those which here appear, with the addition of two, "La Fosseuse"

and "Propos de Braves Gens" between "A Travers Champs" and "Le Napoléon du Peuple." These two were removed in 1839, when it was published in a single volume by Charpentier. In all these issues the book was independent. It became a "Scène de la Vie de Campagne" in 1846, and was then admitted into the *Comédie*. The separate issues of Goguelat's story referred to above made their appearance first in *L'Europe Littéraire* for June 19, 1833 (*before* the book form), and then with the imprint of a sort of syndicate of publishers in 1842.

La Vendetta, which, with *Le Colonel Chabert,* it has been found expedient to include in this volume, while having the advantage of a forcible plot, might have been written on so well-known a *donnée* by many persons besides Balzac. It happens, moreover, to contrast most unfortunately with the terrible and exquisite perfection of Mérimée's "Mateo Falcone." It ranked from the first edition of *Scènes de la Vie Privée* with the "Cat and Racket" group; but unlike those previously mentioned, it had obtained an earlier separate publication in part. For it is one of those stories which Balzac originally divided into chapters, and afterwards printed without them. The first of these, which appeared in the *Silhouette* of April 1830, was entitled "L'Atelier," and the others were "La Désobéissance," "Le Mariage," and "Le Châtiment."

Le Colonel Chabert, which would well have deserved a place in the *Scènes de la Vie Militaire,* so scantily represented in the *Comédie,* has attractions of its own. It reminds us of Balzac's sojourn in the tents of Themis, and of the knowledge that he brought therefrom; it gives an example of his affec-

tion for the *idée fixe,* for the man with a mania; and it is also no inconsiderable example of his pathos.

Like *La Vendetta,* but to a better degree, *Le Colonel Chabert* is a capital example of Balzac's mania for "pulling about" his stories. It is as old as the spring of 1832, when it appeared in the *Artiste,* with the title of *La Transaction,* and in four parts. Before the year was out, it formed part of a collection of tales called *Le Salmigondis,* but was now called *Le Comte Chabert.* In 1835 it became a *Scène de la Vie Parisienne* (the *Comédie* was not yet) as *La Comtesse à deux Maris,* and in three parts. It was shifted to the *Vie Privée* afterwards, with its present title and no divisions; and Balzac, for some reason, altered the date from 1832 to 1840 in the text.

G. S.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

"For a wounded heart—shadow and silence."

To my Mother.

I.

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE MAN

On a lovely spring morning in the year 1829, a man of fifty or thereabouts was wending his way on horseback along the mountain road that leads to a large village near the Grande Chartreuse. This village is the market town of a populous canton that lies within the limits of a valley of some considerable length. The melting of the snows had filled the boulder-strewn bed of the torrent (often dry) that flows through this valley, which is closely shut in between two parallel mountain barriers, above which the peaks of Savoy and of Dauphiné tower on every side.

All the scenery of the country that lies between the chain of the two Mauriennes is very much alike; yet here in the district through which the stranger was traveling there are soft undulations of the land, and varying effects of light which might be sought for elsewhere in vain. Sometimes the valley, suddenly widening, spreads out a soft irregularly-shaped carpet of grass before the eyes; a meadow constantly watered by the mountain streams that keep it fresh and green at all seasons of the year. Sometimes a roughly-built sawmill appears in a picturesque position, with its stacks of long pine trunks with the bark peeled off, and its mill stream, brought from the bed of the torrent in great square wooden pipes, with masses of dripping filament issuing from every crack.

Little cottages, scattered here and there, with their gardens full of blossoming fruit trees, call up the ideas that are aroused by the sight of industrious poverty; while the thought of ease, secured after long years of toil, is suggested by some larger houses farther on, with their red roofs of flat round tiles, shaped like the scales of a fish. There is no door, moreover, that does not duly exhibit a basket in which the cheeses are hung up to dry. Every roadside and every croft is adorned with vines; which here, as in Italy, they train to grow about dwarf elm trees, whose leaves are stripped off to feed the cattle.

Nature, in her caprice, has brought the sloping hills on either side so near together in some places, that there is no room for fields, or buildings, or peasants' huts. Nothing lies between them but the torrent, roaring over its waterfalls between two lofty walls of granite that rise above it, their sides covered with the leafage of tall beeches and dark fir trees to the height of a hundred feet. The trees, with their different kinds of foliage, rise up straight and tall, fantastically colored by patches of lichen, forming magnificent colonnades, with a line of straggling hedgerow of guelder rose, briar rose, box and arbutus above and below the roadway at their feet. The subtle perfume of this undergrowth was mingled just then with scents from the wild mountain region and with the aromatic fragrance of young larch shoots, budding poplars, and resinous pines.

Here and there a wreath of mist about the heights sometimes hid and sometimes gave glimpses of the gray crags, that seemed as dim and vague as the soft flecks of cloud dispersed among them. The whole face of the country changed every moment with the changing light in the sky; the hues of the mountains, the soft shades of their lower slopes, the very shape of the valleys seemed to vary continually. A ray of sunlight through the tree-stems, a clear space made by nature in the woods, or a landslip here and there, coming as a surprise to make a contrast in the foreground, made up an endless series of pictures delightful to see amid the silence,

at the time of year when all things grow young, and when the sun fills a cloudless heaven with a blaze of light. In short, it was a fair land—it was the land of France!

The traveler was a tall man, dressed from head to foot in a suit of blue cloth, which must have been brushed just as carefully every morning as the glossy coat of his horse. He held himself firm and erect in the saddle like an old cavalry officer. Even if his black cravat and doeskin gloves, the pistols that filled his holsters, and the valise securely fastened to the crupper behind him had not combined to mark him out as a soldier, the air of unconcern that sat on his face, his regular features (scarred though they were with the smallpox), his determined manner, self-reliant expression, and the way he held his head, all revealed the habits acquired through military discipline, of which a soldier can never quite divest himself, even after he has retired from service into private life.

Any other traveler would have been filled with wonder at the loveliness of this Alpine region, which grows so bright and smiling as it becomes merged in the great valley systems of southern France; but the officer, who no doubt had previously traversed a country across which the French armies had been drafted in the course of Napoleon's wars, enjoyed the view before him without appearing to be surprised by the many changes that swept across it. It would seem that Napoleon has extinguished in his soldiers the sensation of wonder; for an impassive face is a sure token by which you may know the men who served erewhile under the short-lived yet deathless Eagles of the great Emperor. The traveler was, in fact, one of those soldiers (seldom met with nowadays) whom shot and shell have respected, although they have borne their part on every battlefield where Napoleon commanded.

There had been nothing unusual in his life. He had fought valiantly in the ranks as a simple and loyal soldier, doing his duty as faithfully by night as by day, and whether in or out of his officer's sight. He had never dealt a sabre stroke in vain, and was incapable of giving one too many.

If he wore at his buttonhole the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor, it was because the unanimous voice of his regiment had singled him out as the man who best deserved to receive it after the battle of Borodino.

He belonged to that small minority of undemonstrative retiring natures, who are always at peace with themselves, and who are conscious of a feeling of humiliation at the mere thought of making a request, no matter what its nature may be. So promotion had come to him tardily, and by virtue of the slowly-working laws of seniority. He had been made a sub-lieutenant in 1802, but it was not until 1829 that he became a major, in spite of the grayness of his moustaches. His life had been so blameless that no man in the army, not even the general himself, could approach him without an involuntary feeling of respect. It is possible that he was not forgiven for this indisputable superiority by those who ranked above him; but, on the other hand, there was not one of his men that did not feel for him something of the affection of children for a good mother. For them he knew how to be at once indulgent and severe. He himself had also once served in the ranks, and knew the sorry joys and gaily-endured hardships of the soldier's lot. He knew the errors that may be passed over and the faults that must be punished in his men—"his children," as he always called them—and when on campaign he readily gave them leave to forage for provision for man and horse among the wealthier classes.

His own personal history lay buried beneath the deepest reserve. Like almost every military man in Europe, he had only seen the world through cannon smoke, or in the brief intervals of peace that occurred so seldom during the Emperor's continual wars with the rest of Europe. Had he or had he not thought of marriage? The question remained unsettled. Although no one doubted that Commandant Genestas had made conquests during his sojourn in town after town and country after country where he had taken part in the festivities given and received by the officers, yet no one knew this for a certainty. There was no prudery about him; he would not

decline to join a pleasure party; he in no way offended against military standards; but when questioned as to his affairs of the heart, he either kept silence or answered with a jest. To the words, "How about you, commandant?" addressed to him by an officer over the wine, his reply was, "Pass the bottle, gentlemen."

M. Pierre Joseph Genestas was an unostentatious kind of Bayard. There was nothing romantic nor picturesque about him—he was too thoroughly commonplace. His ways of living were those of a well-to-do man. Although he had nothing beside his pay, and his pension was all that he had to look to in the future, the major always kept two years' pay untouched, and never spent his allowances, like some shrewd old men of business with whom cautious prudence has almost become a mania. He was so little of a gambler that if, when in company, some one was wanted to cut in or to take a bet at écarté, he usually fixed his eyes on his boots; but though he did not allow himself any extravagances, he conformed in every way to custom.

His uniforms lasted longer than those of any other officer in his regiment, as a consequence of the sedulously careful habits that somewhat straitened means had so instilled into him, that they had come to be like a second nature. Perhaps he might have been suspected of meanness if it had not been for the fact that with wonderful disinterestedness and all a comrade's readiness, his purse would be opened for some harebrained boy who had ruined himself at cards or by some other folly. He did a service of this kind with such thoughtful tact, that it seemed as though he himself had at one time lost heavy sums at play; he never considered that he had any right to control the actions of his debtor; he never made mention of the loan. He was the child of his company; he was alone in the world, so he had adopted the army for his fatherland, and the regiment for his family. Very rarely, therefore, did any one seek the motives underlying his praiseworthy turn for thrift; for it pleased others, for the most part, to set it down to a not unnatural wish to increase the

amount of the savings that were to render his old age comfortable. Till the eve of his promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel of cavalry it was fair to suppose that it was his ambition to retire in the course of some campaign with a colonel's epaulettes and pension.

If Genestas' name came up when the officers gossiped after drill, they were wont to classify him among the men who begin with taking the good-conduct prize at school, and who, throughout the term of their natural lives, continue to be punctilious, conscientious, and passionless—as good as white bread, and just as insipid. Thoughtful minds, however, regarded him very differently. Not seldom it would happen that a glance, or an expression as full of significance as the utterance of a savage, would drop from him and bear witness to past storms in his soul; and a careful study of his placid brow revealed a power of stifling down and repressing his passions into inner depths, that had been dearly bought by a lengthy acquaintance with the perils and disastrous hazards of war. An officer who had only just joined the regiment, the son of a peer of France, had said one day of Genestas, that he would have made one of the most conscientious of priests, or the most upright of tradesmen.

"Add, the least of a courtier among marquises," put in Genestas, scanning the young puppy, who did not know that his commandent could overhear him.

There was a burst of laughter at the words, for the lieutenant's father cringed to all the powers that be; he was a man of supple intellect, accustomed to jump with every change of government, and his son took after him.

Men like Genestas are met with now and again in the French army; natures that show themselves to be wholly great at need, and relapse into their ordinary simplicity when the action is over; men that are little mindful of fame and reputation, and utterly forgetful of danger. Perhaps there are many more of them than the shortcomings of our own characters will allow us to imagine. Yet, for all that, any one who believed that Genestas was perfect would be strangely

deceiving himself. The major was suspicious, given to violent outbursts of anger, and apt to be tiresome in argument; he was full of national prejudices, and above all things, would insist that he was in the right, when he was, as a matter of fact, in the wrong. He retained the liking for good wine that he had acquired in the ranks. If he rose from a banquet with all the gravity befitting his position, he seemed serious and pensive, and had no mind at such times to admit any one into his confidence.

Finally, although he was sufficiently acquainted with the customs of society and with the laws of politeness, to which he conformed as rigidly as if they had been military regulations; though he had real mental power, both natural and acquired; and although he had mastered the art of handling men, the science of tactics, the theory of sabre play, and the mysteries of the farrier's craft, his learning had been prodigiously neglected. He knew in a hazy kind of way that Cæsar was a Roman Consul, or an Emperor, and that Alexander was either a Greek or a Macedonian; he would have conceded either quality or origin in both cases without discussion. If the conversation turned on science or history, he was wont to become thoughtful, and to confine his share in it to little approving nods, like a man who by dint of profound thought has arrived at scepticism.

When, at Schönbrunn, on May 13, 1809, Napoleon wrote the bulletin addressed to the Grand Army, then the masters of Vienna, in which he said that *like Medea, the Austrian princes had slain their children with their own hands;* Genestas, who had been recently made a captain, did not wish to compromise his newly conferred dignity by asking who Medea was; he relied upon Napoleon's character, and felt quite sure that the Emperor was incapable of making any announcement not in proper form to the Grand Army and the House of Austria. So he thought that Medea was some archduchess whose conduct laid her open to criticism. Still, as the matter might have some bearing on the art of war, he felt uneasy about the Medea of the bulletin until a day arrived,

when Mlle. Raucourt revived the tragedy of Medea. The captain saw the placard, and did not fail to repair to the Théâtre Français that evening, to see the celebrated actress in her mythological rôle, concerning which he gained some information from his neighbors.

A man, however, who as a private soldier had possessed sufficient force of character to learn to read, write, and cipher, could clearly understand that as a captain he ought to continue his education. So from this time forth he read new books and romances with avidity, in this way gaining a half-knowledge, of which he made a very fair use. He went so far in his gratitude to his teachers as to undertake the defence of Pigault-Lebrun, remarking that in his opinion he was instructive and not seldom profound.

This officer, whose acquired practical wisdom did not allow him to make any journey in vain, had just come from Grenoble, and was on his way to the Grande Chartreuse, after obtaining on the previous evening a week's leave of absence from his colonel. He had not expected that the journey would be a long one; but when, league after league, he had been misled as to the distance by the lying statements of the peasants, he thought it would be prudent not to venture any farther without fortifying the inner man. Small as were his chances of finding any housewife in her dwelling at a time when every one was hard at work in the fields, he stopped before a little cluster of cottages that stood about a piece of land common to all of them, more or less describing a square, which was open to all comers.

The surface of the soil thus held in conjoint ownership was hard and carefully swept, but intersected by open drains. Roses, ivy, and tall grasses grew over the cracked and disjointed walls. Some rags were drying on a miserable currant bush that stood at the entrance of the square. A pig wallowing in a heap of straw was the first inhabitant encountered by Genestas. At the sound of horse hoofs the creature grunted, raised its head, and put a great black cat to flight. A young peasant girl, who was carrying a bundle of grass

on her head, suddenly appeared, followed at a distance by four little brats, clad in rags, it is true, but vigorous, sunburned, picturesque, bold-eyed, and riotous; thorough little imps, looking like angels. The sun shone down with an indescribable purifying influence upon the air, the wretched cottages, the heaps of refuse, and the unkempt little crew.

The soldier asked whether it was possible to obtain a cup of milk. All the answer the girl made him was a hoarse cry. An old woman suddenly appeared on the threshold of one of the cabins, and the young peasant girl passed on into a cowshed, with a gesture that pointed out the aforesaid old woman, towards whom Genestas went; taking care at the same time to keep a tight hold on his horse, lest the children who already were running about under his hoofs should be hurt. He repeated his request, with which the housewife flatly refused to comply. She would not, she said, disturb the cream on the pans full of milk from which butter was to be made. The officer overcame this objection by undertaking to repay her amply for the wasted cream, and then tied up his horse at the door, and went inside the cottage.

The four children belonging to the woman all appeared to be of the same age—an odd circumstance which struck the commandant. A fifth clung about her skirts; a weak, pale, sickly-looking child, who doubtless needed more care than the others, and who on that account was the best beloved, the Benjamin of the family.

Genestas seated himself in a corner by the fireless hearth. A sublime symbol met his eyes on the high mantel-shelf above him—a colored plaster cast of the Virgin with the Child Jesus in her arms. Bare earth made the flooring of the cottage. It had been beaten level in the first instance, but in course of time it had grown rough and uneven, so that though it was clean, its ruggedness was not unlike that of the magnified rind of an orange. A sabot filled with salt, a frying-pan, and a large kettle hung inside the chimney. The farther end of the room was completely filled by a four-post bedstead, with a scalloped valance for decoration. The walls were black;

there was an opening to admit the light above the worm-eaten door; and here and there were a few stools consisting of rough blocks of beech-wood, each set upon three wooden legs; a hutch for bread, a large wooden dipper, a bucket and some earthen milk-pans, a spinning-wheel on the top of the bread-hutch, and a few wicker mats for draining cheeses. Such were the ornaments and household furniture of the wretched dwelling.

The officer, who had been absorbed in flicking his riding-whip against the floor, presently became a witness to a piece of by-play, all unsuspicious though he was that any drama was about to unfold itself. No sooner had the old woman, followed by her scald-headed Benjamin, disappeared through a door that led into her dairy, than the four children, after having stared at the soldier as long as they wished, drove away the pig by way of a beginning. This animal, their accustomed playmate, having come as far as the threshold, the little brats made such an energetic attack upon him, that he was forced to beat a hasty retreat. When the enemy had been driven without, the children besieged the latch of a door that gave way before their united efforts, and slipped out of the worn staple that held it; and finally they bolted into a kind of fruit-loft, where they very soon fell to munching the dried plums, to the amusement of the commandant, who watched this spectacle. The old woman, with the face like parchment and the dirty ragged clothing, came back at this moment, with a jug of milk for her visitor in her hand.

"Oh! you good-for-nothings!" cried she.

She ran to the children, clutched an arm of each child, bundled them into the room, and carefully closed the door of her storehouse of plenty. But she did not take their prunes away from them.

"Now, then, be good, my pets! If one did not look after them," she went on, looking at Genestas, "they would eat up the whole lot of prunes, the madcaps!"

Then she seated herself on a three-legged stool, drew the little weakling between her knees, and began to comb and

wash his head with a woman's skill and with motherly assiduity. The four small thieves hung about. Some of them stood, others leant against the bed or the bread-hutch. They gnawed their prunes without saying a word, but they kept their sly and mischievous eyes fixed upon the stranger. In spite of grimy countenances and noses that stood in need of wiping, they all looked strong and healthy.

"Are they your children?" the soldier asked the old woman.

"Asking your pardon, sir, they are charity children. They give me three francs a month and a pound's weight of soap for each of them."

"But it must cost you twice as much as that to keep them, good woman?"

"That is just what M. Benassis tells me, sir; but if other folk will board the children for the same money, one has to make it do. Nobody wants the children, but for all that there is a good deal of performance to go through before they will let us have them. When the milk we give them comes to nothing, they cost us scarcely anything. Besides that, three francs is a great deal, sir; there are fifteen francs coming in, to say nothing of the five pounds' weight of soap. In our part of the world you would simply have to wear your life out before you would make ten sous a day."

"Then you have some land of your own?" asked the commandant.

"No, sir. I had some land once when my husband was alive; since he died I have done so badly that I had to sell it."

"Why, how do you reach the year's end without debts?" Genestas went on, "when you bring up children for a livelihood and wash and feed them on two sous a day?"

"Well, we never go to St. Sylvester's Day without debt, sir," she went on without ceasing to comb the child's hair. "But so it is—Providence helps us out. I have a couple of cows. Then my daughter and I do some gleaning at harvest-time, and in winter we pick up firewood. Then at night we spin. Ah! we never want to see another winter like this last

one, that is certain! I owe the miller seventy-five francs for flour. Luckily he is M. Benassis' miller. M. Benassis, ah! he is a friend to poor people. He has never asked for his due from anybody, and he will not begin with us. Besides, our cow has a calf, and that will set us a bit straighter."

The four orphans for whom the old woman's affection represented all human guardianship had come to an end of their prunes. As their foster-mother's attention was taken up by the officer with whom she was chatting, they seized the opportunity, and banded themselves together in a compact file, so as to make yet another assault upon the latch of the door that stood between them and the tempting heap of dried plums. They advanced to the attack, not like French soldiers, but as stealthily as Germans, impelled by frank animal greediness.

"Oh! you little rogues! Do you want to finish them up?"

The old woman rose, caught the strongest of the four, administered a gentle slap on the back, and flung him out of the house. Not a tear did he shed, but the others remained breathless with astonishment.

"They give you a lot of trouble——"

"Oh! no, sir, but they can smell the prunes, the little dears. If I were to leave them alone here for a moment, they would stuff themselves with them."

"You are very fond of them?"

The old woman raised her head at this, and looked at him with gentle malice in her eyes.

"Fond of them!" she said. "I have had to part with three of them already. I only have the care of them until they are six years old," she went on with a sigh.

"But where are your own children?"

"I have lost them."

"How old are you?" Genestas asked, to efface the impression left by his last question.

"I am thirty-eight years old, sir. It will be two years come next St. John's Day since my husband died."

She finished dressing the poor sickly mite, who seemed to thank her by a loving look in his faded eyes.

"What a life of toil and self-denial!" thought the cavalry officer.

Beneath a roof worthy of the stable wherein Jesus Christ was born, the hardest duties of motherhood were fulfilled cheerfully and without consciousness of merit. What hearts were these that lay so deeply buried in neglect and obscurity! What wealth, and what poverty! Soldiers, better than other men, can appreciate the element of grandeur to be found in heroism in sabots, in the Evangel clad in rags. The Book may be found elsewhere, adorned, embellished, tricked out in silk and satin and brocade, but here, of a surety, dwelt the spirit of the Book. It was impossible to doubt that Heaven had some holy purpose underlying it all, at the sight of the woman who had taken a mother's lot upon herself, as Jesus Christ had taken the form of a man, who gleaned and suffered and ran into debt for her little waifs; a woman who defrauded herself in her reckonings, and would not own that she was ruining herself that she might be a Mother. One was constrained to admit, at the sight of her, that the good upon earth have something in common with the angels in heaven; Commandant Genestas shook his head as he looked at her.

"Is M. Benassis a clever doctor?" he asked at last.

"I do not know, sir, but he cures poor people for nothing."

"It seems to me that this is a man and no mistake!" he went on, speaking to himself.

"Oh! yes, sir, and a good man too! There is scarcely any one hereabouts that does not put his name in their prayers, morning and night!"

"That is for you, mother," said the soldier, as he gave her several coins, "and that is for the children," he went on, as he added another crown. "Is M. Benassis' house still a long way off?" he asked, when he had mounted his horse.

"Oh! no, sir, a bare league at most."

The commandant set out, fully persuaded that two leagues remained ahead of him. Yet after all he soon caught a glimpse through the trees of the little town's first cluster of houses, and then of all the roofs that crowded about a conical

steeple, whose slates were secured to the angles of the wooden framework by sheets of tin that glittered in the sun. This sort of roof, which has a peculiar appearance, denotes the nearness of the borders of Savoy, where it is very common. The valley is wide at this particular point, and a fair number of houses pleasantly situated, either in the little plain or along the side of the mountain stream, lend human interest to the well-tilled spot, a stronghold with no apparent outlet among the mountains that surround it.

It was noon when Genestas reined in his horse beneath an avenue of elm-trees half-way up the hillside, and only a few paces from the town, to ask the group of children who stood before him for M. Benassis' house. At first the children looked at each other, then they scrutinized the stranger with the expression that they usually wear when they set eyes upon anything for the first time; a different curiosity and a different thought in every little face. Then the boldest and merriest of the band, a little bright-eyed urchin, with bare, muddy feet, repeated his words over again, in child fashion.

"M. Benassis' house, sir?" adding, "I will show you the way there."

He walked along in front of the horse, prompted quite as much by a wish to gain a kind of importance by being in the stranger's company, as by a child's love of being useful, or the imperative craving to be doing something, that possesses mind and body at his age. The officer followed him for the entire length of the principal street of the country town. The way was paved with cobblestones, and wound in and out among the houses, which their owners had erected along its course in the most arbitrary fashion. In one place a bake-house had been built out into the middle of the roadway; in another a gable protruded, partially obstructing the passage, and yet farther on a mountain stream flowed across it in a runnel. Genestas noticed a fair number of roofs of tarred shingle, but yet more of them were thatched; a few were tiled, and some seven or eight (belonging no doubt to the curé, the justice of the peace, and some of the wealthier towns-

men) were covered with slates. There was a total absence of regard for appearances befitting a village at the end of the world, which had nothing beyond it, and no connection with any other place. The people who lived in it seemed to belong to one family that dwelt beyond the limits of the bustling world, with which the collector of taxes and a few ties of the very slenderest alone served to connect them.

When Genestas had gone a step or two farther, he saw on the mountain side a broad road that rose above the village. Clearly there must be an old town and a new town; and, indeed, when the commandant reached a spot where he could slacken the pace of his horse, he could easily see between the houses some well-built dwellings whose new roofs brightened the old-fashioned village. An avenue of trees rose above these new houses, and from among them came the confused sounds of several industries. He heard the songs peculiar to busy toilers, a murmur of many workshops, the rasping of files, and the sound of falling hammers. He saw the thin lines of smoke from the chimneys of each household, and the more copious outpourings from the forges of the van-builder, the blacksmith, and the farrier. At length, at the very end of the village towards which his guide was taking him, Genestas beheld scattered farms and well-tilled fields and plantations of trees in thorough order. It might have been a little corner of Brie, so hidden away in a great fold of the land, that at first sight its existence would not be suspected between the little town and the mountains that closed the country round.

Presently the child stopped.

"There is the door of *his* house," he remarked.

The officer dismounted and passed his arm through the bridle. Then, thinking that the laborer is worthy of his hire, he drew a few sous from his waistcoat pocket, and held them out to the child, who looked astonished at this, opened his eyes very wide, and stayed on, without thanking him, to watch what the stranger would do next.

"Civilization has not made much headway hereabouts,"

thought Genestas; "the religion of work is in full force, and begging has not yet come thus far."

His guide, more from curiosity than from any interested motive, propped himself against the wall that rose to the height of a man's elbow. Upon this wall, which enclosed the yard belonging to the house, there ran a black wooden railing on either side of the square pillars of the gates. The lower part of the gates themselves was of solid wood that had been painted gray at some period in the past; the upper part consisted of a grating of yellowish spear-shaped bars. These decorations, which had lost all their color, gradually rose on either half of the gates till they reached the centre where they met; their spikes forming, when both leaves were shut, an outline similar to that of a pine-cone. The worm-eaten gates themselves, with their patches of velvet lichen, were almost destroyed by the alternate action of sun and rain. A few aloe plants and some chance-sown pellitory grew on the tops of the square pillars of the gates, which all but concealed the stems of a couple of thornless acacias that raised their tufted spikes, like a pair of green powder-puffs, in the yard.

The condition of the gateway revealed a certain carelessness in its owner which did not seem to suit the officer's turn of mind. He knitted his brows like a man who is obliged to relinquish some illusion. We usually judge others by our own standard; and although we indulgently forgive our own shortcomings in them, we condemn them harshly for the lack of our special virtues. If the commandant had expected M. Benassis to be a methodical or practical man, there were unmistakable indications of absolute indifference as to his material concerns in the state of the gates of his house. A soldier possessed by Genesta's passion for domestic economy could not help at once drawing inferences as to the life and character of its owner from the gateway before him; and this, in spite of his habits of circumspection, he in nowise failed to do. The gates were left ajar, moreover—another piece of carelessness!

Encouraged by this countrified trust in all comers, the

officer entered the yard without ceremony, and tethered his horse to the bars of the gate. While he was knotting the bridle, a neighing sound from the stable caused both horse and rider to turn their eyes involuntarily in that direction. The door opened, and an old servant put out his head. He wore a red woolen bonnet, exactly like the Phrygian cap in which Liberty is tricked out, a piece of head-gear in common use in this country.

As there was room for several horses, this worthy individual, after inquiring whether Genestas had come to see M. Benassis, offered the hospitality of the stable to the newly-arrived steed, a very fine animal, at which he looked with an expression of admiring affection. The commandant followed his horse to see how things were to go with it. The stable was clean, there was plenty of litter, and there was the same peculiar air of sleek content about M. Benassis' pair of horses that distinguishes the curé's horse from all the rest of his tribe. A maid-servant from within the house came out upon the flight of steps and waited. She appeared to be the proper authority to whom the stranger's inquiries were to be addressed, although the stableman had already told him that M. Benassis was not at home.

"The master has gone to the flour-mill," said he. "If you like to overtake him, you have only to go along the path that leads to the meadow; and the mill is at the end of it."

Genestas preferred seeing the country to waiting about indefinitely for Benassis' return, so he set out along the way that led to the flour-mill. When he had gone beyond the irregular line traced by the town upon the hillside, he came in sight of the mill and the valley, and of one of the loveliest landscapes that he had ever seen.

The mountains bar the course of the river, which forms a little lake at their feet, and raise their crests above it, tier on tier. Their many valleys are revealed by the changing hues of the light, or by the more or less clear outlines of the mountain ridges fledged with their dark forests of pines. The mill had not long been built. It stood just where the mountain

stream fell into the little lake. There was all the charm about it peculiar to a lonely house surrounded by water and hidden away behind the heads of a few trees that love to grow by the water-side. On the farther bank of the river, at the foot of a mountain, with a faint red glow of sunset upon its highest crest, Genestas caught a glimpse of a dozen deserted cottages. All the windows and doors had been taken away, and sufficiently large holes were conspicuous in the dilapidated roofs, but the surrounding land was laid out in fields that were highly cultivated, and the old garden spaces had been turned into meadows, watered by a system of irrigation as artfully contrived as that in use in Limousin. Unconsciously the commandant paused to look at the ruins of the village before him.

How is it that men can never behold any ruins, even of the humblest kind, without feeling deeply stirred? Doubtless it is because they seem to be a typical representation of evil fortune whose weight is felt so differently by different natures. The thought of death is called up by a churchyard, but a deserted village puts us in mind of the sorrows of life; death is but one misfortune always foreseen, but the sorrows of life are infinite. Does not the thought of the infinite underlie all great melancholy?

The officer reached the stony path by the mill-pond before he could hit upon an explanation of this deserted village. The miller's lad was sitting on some sacks of corn near the door of the house. Genestas asked for M. Benassis.

"M. Benassis went over there," said the miller, pointing out one of the ruined cottages.

"Has the village been burned down?" asked the commandant.

"No, sir."

"Then how did it come to be in this state?" inquired Genestas.

"Ah! how?" the miller answered, as he shrugged his shoulders and went indoors; "M. Benassis will tell you that."

The officer went over a rough sort of bridge built up of

boulders taken from the torrent bed, and soon reached the house that had been pointed out to him. The thatched roof of the dwelling was still entire; it was covered with moss indeed, but there were no holes in it, and the door and its fastenings seemed to be in good repair. Genestas saw a fire on the hearth as he entered, an old woman kneeling in the chimney-corner before a sick man seated in a chair, and another man, who was standing with his face turned toward the fireplace. The house consisted of a single room, which was lighted by a wretched window covered with linen cloth. The floor was of beaten earth; the chair, a table, and a truckle bed comprised the whole of the furniture. The commandant had never seen anything so poor and bare, not even in Russia, where the moujik's huts are like the dens of wild beasts. Nothing within it spoke of ordinary life; there were not even the simplest appliances for cooking food of the commonest description. It might have been a dog-kennel without a drinking-pan. But for the truckle-bed, a smock-frock hanging from a nail, and some sabots filled with straw, which composed the invalid's entire wardrobe, this cottage would have looked as empty as the others. The aged peasant woman upon her knees was devoting all her attention to keeping the sufferer's feet in a tub filled with a brown liquid. Hearing a footstep and the clank of spurs, which sounded strangely in ears accustomed to the plodding pace of country folk, the man turned towards Genestas. A sort of surprise, in which the old woman shared, was visible in his face.

"There is no need to ask if you are M. Benassis," said the soldier. "You will pardon me, sir, if, as a stranger impatient to see you, I have come to seek you on your field of battle, instead of awaiting you at your house. Pray do not disturb yourself; go on with what you are doing. When it is over, I will tell you the purpose of my visit."

Genestas half seated himself upon the edge of the table, and remained silent. The firelight shone more brightly in the room than the faint rays of the sun, for the mountain crests intercepted them, so that they seldom reached this corner of

the valley. A few branches of resinous pinewood made a bright blaze, and it was by the light of this fire that the soldier saw the face of the man towards whom he was drawn by a secret motive, by a wish to seek him out, to study and to know him thoroughly well. M. Benassis, the local doctor, heard Genestas with indifference, and with folded arms he returned his bow, and went back to his patient, quite unaware that he was being subjected to a scrutiny as earnest as that which the soldier turned upon him.

Benassis was a man of ordinary height, broad-shouldered and deep-chested. A capacious green overcoat, buttoned up to the chin, prevented the officer from observing any characteristic details of his personal appearance; but his dark and motionless figure served as a strong relief to his face, which caught the bright light of the blazing fire. The face was not unlike that of a satyr; there was the same slightly protruding forehead, full, in this case, of prominences, all more or less denoting character; the same turned-up nose, with a sprightly cleavage at the tip; the same high cheek-bones. The lines of the mouth were crooked; the lips, thick and red. The chin turned sharply upwards. There was an alert, animated look in the brown eyes, to which their pearly whites gave great brightness, and which expressed passions now subdued. His iron-gray hair, the deep wrinkles in his face, the bushy eyebrows that had grown white already, the veins on his protuberant nose, the tanned face covered with red blotches, everything about him, in short, indicated a man of fifty and the hard work of his profession. The officer could come to no conclusion as to the capacity of the head, which was covered by a close cap; but hidden though it was, it seemed to him to be one of the square-shaped kind that gave rise to the expression "square-headed." Genestas was accustomed to read the indications that mark the features of men destined to do great things, since he had been brought into close relations with the energetic natures sought out by Napoleon; so he suspected that there must be some mystery in this life of obscurity, and said to himself as he looked at the remarkable face before him:

"How come it that he is still a country doctor?"

When he had made a careful study of this countenance, that, in spite of its resemblance to other human faces, revealed an inner life nowise in harmony with a commonplace exterior, he could not help sharing the doctor's interest in his patient; and the sight of that patient completely changed the current of his thoughts.

Much as the old cavalry officer had seen in the course of his soldier's career, he felt a thrill of surprise and horror at the sight of a human face which could never have been lighted up with thought—a livid face in which a look of dumb suffering showed so plainly—the same look that is sometimes worn by a child too young to speak, and too weak to cry any longer; in short, it was the wholly animal face of an old dying crétin. The crétin was the one variety of the human species with which the commandment had not yet come in contact. At the sight of the deep, circular folds of skin on the forehead, the sodden, fish-like eyes, and the head, with its short, coarse, scantily-growing hair—a head utterly divested of all the faculties of the senses—who would not have experienced, as Genestas did, an instinctive feeling of repulsion for a being that had neither the physical beauty of an animal nor the mental endowments of man, who was possessed of neither instinct nor reason, and who had never heard nor spoken any kind of articulate speech? It seemed difficult to expend any regrets over the poor wretch now visibly drawing towards the very end of an existence which had not been life in any sense of the word; yet the old woman watched him with touching anxiety, and was rubbing his legs where the hot water did not reach them with as much tenderness as if he had been her husband. Benassis himself, after a close scrutiny of the dull eyes and corpse-like face, gently took the crétin's hand and felt his pulse.

"The bath is doing no good," he said, shaking his head; "let us put him to bed again."

He lifted the inert mass himself, and carried him across to the truckle-bed, from whence, no doubt, he had just taken

him. Carefully he laid him at full length, and straightened the limbs that were growing cold already, putting the head and hand in position, with all the heed that a mother could bestow upon her child.

"It is all over, death is very near," added Benassis, who remained standing by the bedside.

The old woman gazed at the dying form, with her hands on her hips. A few tears stole down her cheeks. Genestas remained silent. He was unable to explain to himself how it was that the death of a being that concerned him so little should affect him so much. Unconsciously he shared the feeling of boundless pity that these hapless creatures excite among the dwellers in the sunless valleys wherein Nature has placed them. This sentiment has degenerated into a kind of religious superstition in families to which crétins belong; but does it not spring from the most beautiful of Christian virtues—from charity, and from a belief in a reward hereafter, that most effectual support of our social system, and the one thought that enables us to endure our miseries? The hope of inheriting eternal bliss helps the relations of these unhappy creatures and all others round about them to exert on a large scale, and with sublime devotion, a mother's ceaseless protecting care over an apathetic creature who does not understand it in the first instance, and who in a little while forgets it all. Wonderful power of religion! that has brought a blind beneficence to the aid of an equally blind misery. Wherever crétins exist, there is a popular belief that the presence of one of these creatures brings luck to a family—a superstition that serves to sweeten lives which, in the midst of a town population, would be condemned by a mistaken philanthropy to submit to the harsh discipline of an asylum. In the higher end of the valley of the Isère, where crétins are very numerous, they lead an out-of-door life with the cattle which they are taught to herd. There, at any rate, they are at large, and receive the reverence due to misfortune.

A moment later the village bell clinked at slow regular intervals, to acquaint the flock with the death of one of their

number. In the sound that reached the cottage but faintly across the intervening space, there was a thought of religion which seemed to fill it with a melancholy peace. The tread of many feet echoed up the road, giving notice of an approaching crowd of people—a crowd that uttered not a word. Then suddenly the chanting of the Church broke the stillness, calling up the confused thoughts that take possession of the most sceptical minds, and compel them to yield to the influence of the touching harmonies of the human voice. The Church was coming to the aid of a creature that knew her not. The curé appeared, preceded by a choir-boy, who bore the crucifix, and followed by the sacristan carrying the vase of holy water, and by some fifty women, old men, and children, who had all come to add their prayers to those of the Church. The doctor and the soldier looked at each other, and silently withdrew to a corner to make room for the kneeling crowd within and without the cottage. During the consoling ceremony of the Viaticum, celebrated for one who had never sinned, but to whom the Church on earth was bidding a last farewell, there were signs of real sorrow on most of the rough faces of the gathering, and tears flowed over rugged cheeks that sun and wind and labor in the fields had tanned and wrinkled. The sentiment of voluntary kinship was easy to explain. There was not one in the place who had not pitied the unhappy creature, not one who would not have given him his daily bread. Had he not met with a father's care from every child, and found a mother in the merriest little girl?

"He is dead?" said the curé.

The words struck his hearers with the most unfeigned dismay. The tall candles were lighted, and several people undertook to watch with the dead that night. Benassis and the soldier went out. A group of peasants in the doorway stopped the doctor to say:

"Ah! if you have not saved his life, sir, it was doubtless because God wished to take him to Himself."

"I did my best, children," the doctor answered.

When they had come a few paces from the deserted village,

whose last inhabitant had just died, the doctor spoke to Genestas.

"You would not believe, sir, what real solace is contained for me in what those peasants have just said. Ten years ago I was very nearly stoned to death in this village. It is empty to-day, but thirty families lived in it then."

Genestas' face and gesture so plainly expressed an inquiry, that, as they went along, the doctor told him the story promised by this beginning.

"When I first settled here, sir, I found a dozen crétins in this part of the canton," and the doctor turned round to point out the ruined cottages for the officer's benefit. "All the favorable conditions for spreading the hideous disease are there; the air is stagnant, the hamlet lies in the valley bottom, close beside a torrent supplied with water by the melted snows, and the sunlight only falls on the mountain-top, so that the valley itself gets no good of the sun. Marriages among these unfortunate creatures are not forbidden by law, and in this district they are protected by superstitious notions, of whose power I had no conception—superstitions which I blamed at first, and afterwards came to admire. So crétinism was in a fair way to spread all over the valley from this spot. Was it not doing the country a great service to put a stop to this mental and physical contagion? But imperatively as the salutary changes were required, they might cost the life of any man who endeavored to bring them about. Here, as in other social spheres, if any good is to be done, we come into collision not merely with vested interests, but with something far more dangerous to meddle with—religious ideas crystallized into superstitions, the most permanent form taken by human thought. I feared nothing.

"In the first place, I sought for the position of mayor in the canton, and in this I succeeded. Then, after obtaining a verbal sanction from the prefect, and by paying down the money, I had several of these unfortunate creatures transported over to Aiguebelle, in Savoy, by night. There are a great many of them there, and they were certain to be very

kindly treated. When this act of humanity came to be known, the whole countryside looked upon me as a monster. The curé preached against me. In spite of all the pains I took to explain to all the shrewder heads of the little place the immense importance of being rid of the idiots, and in spite of the fact that I gave my services gratuitously to the sick people of the district, a shot was fired at me from the corner of a wood.

"I went to the Bishop of Grenoble and asked him to change the curé. Monseigneur was good enough to allow me to choose a priest who would share in my labors, and it was my happy fortune to meet with one of those rare natures that seem to have dropped down from heaven. Then I went on with my enterprise. After preparing people's minds, I made another transportation by night, and six more crétins were taken away. In this second attempt I had the support of several people to whom I had rendered some service, and I was backed by the members of the Communal Council, for I had appealed to their parsimonious instincts, showing them how much it cost to support the poor wretches, and pointing out how largely they might gain by converting their plots of ground (to which the idiots had no proper title) into allotments which were needed in the township.

"All the rich were on my side; but the poor, the old women, the children, and a few pig-headed people were violently opposed to me. Unluckily it so fell out that my last removal had not been completely carried out. The crétin whom you have just seen, not having returned to his house, had not been taken away, so that the next morning he was the sole remaining example of his species in the village. There were several families still living there; but though they were little better than idiots, they were, at any rate, free from the taint of crétinism. I determined to go through with my work, and came officially in open day to take the luckless creature from his dwelling. I had no sooner left my house than my intention got abroad. The crétin's friends were there before me, and in front of his hovel I found a crowd of women and

children and old people, who hailed my arrival with insults accompanied by a shower of stones.

"In the midst of the uproar I should perhaps have fallen a victim to the frenzy that possesses a crowd excited by its own outcries and stirred up by one common feeling, but the crétin saved my life! The poor creature came out of his hut, and raised the clucking sound of his voice. He seemed to be an absolute ruler over the fanatical mob, for the sight of him put a sudden stop to the clamor. It occurred to me that I might arrange a compromise, and thanks to the quiet so opportunely restored, I was able to propose and explain it. Of course, those who approved of my schemes would not dare to second me in this emergency, their support was sure to be of a purely passive kind, while these superstitious folk would exert the most active vigilance to keep their last idol among them; it was impossible, it seemed to me, to take him away from them. So I promised to leave the crétin in peace in his dwelling, with the understanding that he should live quite by himself, and that the remaining families in the village should cross the stream and come to live in the town, in some new houses which I myself undertook to build, adding to each house a piece of ground for which the Commune was to repay me later on.

"Well, my dear sir, it took me fully six months to overcome their objection to this bargain, however much it may have been to the advantage of the village families. The affection which they have for their wretched hovels in country districts is something quite unexplainable. No matter how unwholesome his hovel may be, a peasant clings far more to it than a banker does to his mansion. The reason of it? That I do not know. Perhaps thoughts and feelings are strongest in those who have but few of them, simply because they have but few. Perhaps material things count for much in the lives of those who live so little in thought; certain it is that the less they have, the dearer their possessions are to them. Perhaps, too, it is with the peasant as with the prisoner—he does not squander the powers of his soul, he centres

them all upon a single idea, and this is how his feelings come to be so exceedingly strong. Pardon these reflections on the part of a man who seldom exchanges ideas with any one. But, indeed, you must not suppose, sir, that I am much taken up with these far-fetched considerations. We all have to be active and practical here.

"Alas! the fewer ideas these poor folk have in their heads, the harder it is to make them see where their real interests lie. There was nothing for it but to give my whole attention to every trifling detail of my enterprise. One and all made me the same answer, one of those sayings, filled with homely sense, to which there is no possible reply, 'But your houses are not yet built, sir!' they used to say. 'Very good,' said I, 'promise me that as soon as they are finished you will come and live in them.'

"Luckily, sir, I obtained a decision to the effect that the whole of the mountain side above the now deserted village was the property of the township. The sum of money brought in by the woods on the higher slopes paid for the building of the new houses and for the land on which they stood. They were built forthwith; and when once one of my refractory families was fairly settled in, the rest of them were not slow to follow. The benefits of the change were so evident that even the most bigoted believer in the village, which you might call soulless as well as sunless, could not but appreciate them. The final decision in this matter, which gave some property to the Commune, in the possession of which we were confirmed by the Council of State, made me a person of great importance in the canton. But what a lot of worry there was over it!" the doctor remarked, stopping short, and raising a hand which he let fall again—a gesture that spoke volumes. "No one knows, as I do, the distance between the town and the Prefecture—whence nothing comes out—and from the Prefecture to the Council of State—where nothing can be got in."

"Well, after all," he resumed, "peace be to the powers of this world! They yielded to my importunities, and that is

saying a great deal. If you only knew the good that came of a carelessly scrawled signature! Why, sir, two years after I had taken these momentous trifles in hand, and had carried the matter through to the end, every poor family in the Commune had two cows at least, which they pastured on the mountain side, where (without waiting this time for an authorization from the Council of State) I had established a system of irrigation by means of cross trenches, like those in Switzerland, Auvergne, and Limousin. Much to their astonishment, the townspeople saw some capital meadows springing up under their eyes, and thanks to the improvement in the pasturage, the yield of milk was very much larger. The results of this triumph were great indeed. Every one followed the example set by my system of irrigation; cattle were multiplied; the area of meadow land and every kind of out-turn increased. I had nothing to fear after that. I could continue my efforts to improve this, as yet, untilled corner of the earth; and to civilize those who dwelt in it, whose minds had hitherto lain dormant.

"Well, sir, folk like us, who live out of the world, are very talkative. If you ask us a question, there is no knowing where the answer will come to an end; but to cut it short—there were about seven hundred souls in the valley when I came to it, and now the population numbers some two thousand. I had gained the good opinion of every one in that matter of the last crétin; and when I had constantly shown that I could rule both mildly and firmly, I became a local oracle. I did everything that I could to win their confidence; I did not ask for it, nor did I appear to seek it; but I tried to inspire every one with the deepest respect for my character, by the scrupulous way in which I always fulfilled my engagements, even when they were of the most trifling kind. When I had pledged myself to care for the poor creature whose death you have just witnessed, I looked after him much more effectually than any of his previous guardians had done. He has been fed and cared for as the adopted child of the Commune. After a time the dwellers in the

valley ended by understanding the service which I had done them in spite of themselves, but for all that, they still cherish some traces of that old superstition of theirs. Far be it from me to blame them for it; has not their cult of the crétin often furnished me with an argument when I have tried to induce those who had possession of their faculties to help the unfortunate? But here we are," said Benassis, when after a moment's pause he saw the roof of his own house.

Far from expecting the slightest expression of praise or of thanks from his listener, it appeared from his way of telling the story of this episode in his administrative career, that he had been moved by an unconscious desire to pour out the thoughts that filled his mind, after the manner of folk that live very retired lives.

"I have taken the liberty of putting my horse in your stable, sir," said the commandant, "for which in your goodness you will perhaps pardon me when you learn the object of my journey hither."

"Ah! yes, what is it?" asked Benassis, appearing to shake off his preoccupied mood, and to recollect that his companion was a stranger to him. The frankness and unreserve of his nature had led him to accept Genestas as an acquaintance.

"I have heard of the almost miraculous recovery of M. Gravier of Grenoble, whom you received into your house," was the soldier's answer. "I have come to you, hoping that you will give a like attention to my case, although I have not a similar claim to your benevolence; and yet, I am possibly not undeserving of it. I am an old soldier, and wounds of long standing give me no peace. It will take you at least a week to study my condition, for the pain only comes back at intervals, and——"

"Very good, sir," Benassis broke in; "M. Gravier's room is in readiness. Come in."

They went into the house, the doctor flinging open the door with an eagerness that Genestas attributed to his pleasure at receiving a boarder.

"Jacquotte!" Benassis called out. "This gentleman will dine with us."

"But would it not be as well for us to settle about the payment?"

"Payment for what?" inquired the doctor.

"For my board. You cannot keep me and my horse as well, without——"

"If you are wealthy, you will repay me amply," Benassis replied; "and if you are not, I will take nothing whatever."

"Nothing whatever seems to me to be too dear," said Genestas. "But, rich or poor, will ten francs a day (not including your professional services) be acceptable to you?"

"Nothing could be less acceptable to me than payment for the pleasure of entertaining a visitor," the doctor answered, knitting his brows; "and as to my advice, you shall have it if I like you, and not unless. Rich people shall not have my time by paying for it; it belongs exclusively to the folk here in the valley. I do not care about fame or fortune, and I look for neither praise nor gratitude from my patients. Any money which you may pay me will go to the druggists in Grenoble, to pay for the medicine required by the poor of the neighborhood."

Any one who had heard the words flung out, abruptly, it is true, but without a trace of bitterness in them, would have said to himself with Genestas, "Here is a man made of good human clay."

"Well, then, I will pay you ten francs a day, sir," the soldier answered, returning to the charge with wonted pertinacity, "and you will do as you choose after that. We shall understand each other better, now that the question is settled," he added, grasping the doctor's hand with eager cordiality. "In spite of my ten francs, you shall see that I am by no means a Tartar."

After this passage of arms, in which Benassis showed not the slightest sign of a wish to appear generous or to pose as a philanthropist, the supposed invalid entered his doctor's house. Everything within it was in keeping with the ruinous state of the gateway, and with the clothing worn by its owner. There was an utter disregard for everything not essentially useful, which was visible even in the smallest trifles. Benassis

took Genestas through the kitchen, that being the shortest way to the dining-room.

Had the kitchen belonged to an inn, it could not have been more smoke-begrimed; and if there was a sufficiency of cooking pots within its precincts, this lavish supply was Jacquotte's doing—Jacquotte who had formerly been the curé's housekeeper—Jacquotte who always said "we," and who ruled supreme over the doctor's household. If, for instance, there was a brightly polished warming-pan above the mantelshelf, it probably hung there because Jacquotte liked to sleep warm of a winter night, which led her incidentally to warm her master's sheets. He never took a thought about anything; so she was wont to say.

It was on account of a defect, which any one else would have found intolerable, that Benassis had taken her into his service. Jacquotte had a mind to rule the house, and a woman who would rule his house was the very person that the doctor wanted. So Jacquotte bought and sold, made alterations about the place, set up and took down, arranged and disarranged everything at her own sweet will; her master had never raised a murmur. Over the yard, the stable, the man-servant and the kitchen, in fact, over the whole house and garden and its master, Jacquotte's sway was absolute. She looked out fresh linen, saw to the washing, and laid in provisions without consulting anybody. She decided everything that went on in the house, and the date when the pigs were to be killed. She scolded the gardener, decreed the menu at breakfast and dinner, and went from cellar to garret, and from garret to cellar, setting everything to rights according to her notions, without a word of opposition of any sort or description. Benassis had made but two stipulations—he wished to dine at six o'clock, and that the household expenses should not exceed a certain fixed sum every month.

A woman whom every one obeys in this way is always singing, so Jacquotte laughed and warbled on the staircase; she was always humming something when she was not singing, and singing when she was not humming. Jacquotte had a

natural liking for cleanliness, so she kept the house neat and clean. If her tastes had been different, it would have been a sad thing for M. Benassis (so she was wont to say), for the poor man was so little particular that you might feed him on cabbage for partridges, and he would not find it out; and if it were not for her, he would very often wear the same shirt for a week on end. Jacquotte, however, was an indefatigable folder of linen, a born rubber and polisher of furniture, and a passionate lover of a perfectly religious and ceremonial cleanliness of the most scrupulous, the most radiant, and most fragrant kind. A sworn foe to dust, she swept and scoured and washed without ceasing.

The condition of the gateway caused her acute distress. On the first day of every month for the past ten years, she had extorted from her master a promise that he would replace the gate with a new one, that the walls of the house should be lime-washed, and that everything should be made quite straight and proper about the place; but so far, the master had not kept his word. So it happened that whenever she fell to lamenting over Benassis' deeply-rooted carelessness about things, she nearly always ended solemnly in these words, with which all her praises of her master usually terminated:

"You cannot say that he is a fool, because he works such miracles, as you may say, in the place; but, all the same, he is a fool at times, such a fool that you have to do everything for him as if he were a child."

Jacquotte loved the house as if it had belonged to her; and when she had lived in it for twenty-two years, had she not some grounds for deluding herself on that head? After the curé's death the house had been for sale; and Benassis, who had only just come into the country, had bought it as it stood, with the walls about it and the ground belonging to it, together with the plate, wine, and furniture, the old sun-dial, the poultry, the horse, and the woman-servant. Jacquotte was the very pattern of a working housekeeper, with her clumsy figure, and her bodice, always of the same dark brown print with large red spots on it, which fitted her so tightly

that it looked as if the material must give way if she moved at all. Her colorless face, with its double chin, looked out from under a round plaited cap, which made her look paler than she really was. She talked incessantly, and always in a loud voice—this short, active woman, with the plump, busy hands. Indeed, if Jacquotte was silent for a moment, and took a corner of her apron so as to turn it up in a triangle, it meant that a lengthy expostulation was about to be delivered for the benefit of master or man. Jacquotte was beyond all doubt the happiest cook in the kingdom; for, that nothing might be lacking in a measure of felicity as great as may be known in this world below, her vanity was continually gratified—the townspeople regarded her as an authority of an indefinite kind, and ranked her somewhere between the mayor and the park-keeper.

The master of the house found nobody in the kitchen when he entered it.

"Where the devil are they all gone?" he asked. "Pardon me for bringing you in this way," he went on, turning to Genestas. "The front entrance opens into the garden, but I am so little accustomed to receive visitors that—Jacquotte!" he called in rather peremptory tones.

A woman's voice answered to the name from the interior of the house. A moment later Jacquotte, assuming the offensive, called in her turn to Benassis, who forthwith went into the dining-room.

"Just like you, sir!" she exclaimed; "you never do like anybody else. You always ask people to dinner without telling me beforehand, and you think that everything is settled as soon as you have called for Jacquotte! You are not going to have the gentleman sit in the kitchen, are you? Is not the salon to be unlocked and a fire to be lighted? Nicolle is there, and will see after everything. Now take the gentleman into the garden for a minute; that will amuse him; if he likes to look at pretty things, show him the arbor of hornbeam trees that the poor dear old gentleman made. I shall have time then to lay the cloth, and to get everything ready, the dinner and the salon too."

"Yes. But, Jacquotte," Benassis went on, "the gentleman is going to stay with us. Do not forget to give a look round M. Gravier's room, and see about the sheets and things, and——"

"Now you are not going to interfere about the sheets, are you?" asked Jacquotte. "If he is to sleep here, I know what must be done for him perfectly well. You have not so much as set foot in M. Gravier's room these ten months past. There is nothing to see there, the place is as clean as a new pin. Then will the gentleman make some stay here?" she continued in a milder tone.

"Yes."

"How long will he stay?"

"Faith, I do not know. What does it matter to you?"

"What does it matter to me, sir? Oh! very well, what does it matter to me? Did any one ever hear the like! And the provisions and all that, and——"

At any other time she would have overwhelmed her master with reproaches for his breach of trust, but now she followed him into the kitchen before the torrent of words had come to an end. She had guessed that there was a prospect of a boarder, and was eager to see Genestas, to whom she made a very deferential courtesy, while she scanned him from head to foot. A thoughtful and dejected expression gave a harsh look to the soldier's face. In the dialogue between master and servant the latter had appeared to him in the light of a nonentity; and although he regretted the fact, this revelation had lessened the high opinion that he had formed of the man whose persistent efforts to save the district from the horrors of crétinism had won his admiration.

"I do not like the looks of that fellow at all!" said Jacquotte to herself.

"If you are not tired, sir," said the doctor to his supposed patient, "we will take a turn round the garden before dinner."

"Willingly," answered the commandant.

They went through the dining-room, and reached the garden by way of a sort of vestibule at the foot of the stair-

case between the salon and the dining-room. Beyond a great glass door at the farther end of the vestibule lay a flight of stone steps which adorned the garden side of the house. The garden itself was divided into four large squares of equal size by two paths that intersected each other in the form of a cross, a box edging along their sides. At the farther end there was a thick, green alley of hornbeam trees, which had been the joy and pride of the late owner. The soldier seated himself on a worm-eaten bench, and saw neither the trellis-work nor the espaliers, nor the vegetables of which Jacquotte took such great care. She followed the traditions of the epicurean churchman to whom this valuable garden owed its origin; but Benassis himself regarded it with sufficient indifference.

The commandant turned their talk from the trivial matters which had occupied them by saying to the doctor:

"How comes it, sir, that the population of the valley has been trebled in ten years? There were seven hundred souls in it when you came, and to-day you say that they number more than two thousand."

"You are the first person who has put that question to me," the doctor answered. "Though it has been my aim to develop the capabilities of this little corner of the earth to the utmost, the constant pressure of a busy life has not left me time to think over the way in which (like the mendicant brother) I have made 'broth from a flint' on a large scale. M. Gravier himself, who is one of several who have done a great deal for us, and to whom I was able to render a service by re-establishing his health, has never given a thought to the theory, though he has been everywhere over our mountain sides with me, to see its practical results."

There was a moment's silence, during which Benassis followed his own thoughts, careless of the keen glance by which his guest tried to fathom him.

"You ask how it came about, my dear sir?" the doctor resumed. "It came about quite naturally through the working of the social law by which the need and means of supply-

ing it are correlated. Herein lies the whole story. Races who have no wants are always poor. When I first came to live here in this township, there were about a hundred and thirty peasant families in it, and some two hundred hearths in the valley. The local authorities were such as might be expected in the prevailing wretchedness of the population. The mayor himself could not write, and the deputy-mayor was a small farmer, who lived beyond the limits of the Commune. The justice of the peace was a poor devil who had nothing but his salary, and who was forced to relinquish the registration of births, marriages, and deaths to his clerk, another hapless wretch who was scarcely able to understand his duties. The old curé had died at the age of seventy, and his curate, a quite uneducated man, had just succeeded to his position. These people comprised all the intelligence of the district over which they ruled.

"Those who dwelt amidst these lovely natural surroundings groveled in squalor and lived upon potatoes, milk, butter, and cheese. The only produce that brought in any money was the cheese, which most of them carried in small baskets to Grenoble or its outskirts. The richer or the more energetic among them sowed buckwheat for home consumption; sometimes they raised a crop of barley or oats, but wheat was unknown. The only trader in the place was the mayor, who owned a sawmill and bought up timber at a low price to sell again. In the absence of roads, his tree trunks had to be transported during the summer season; each log was dragged along one at a time, and with no small difficulty, by means of a chain attached to a halter about his horse's neck, and an iron hook at the farther end of the chain, which was driven into the wood. Any one who went to Grenoble, whether on horseback or afoot, was obliged to follow a track high up on the mountain side, for the valley was quite impassable. The pretty road between this place and the first village that you reach as you come into the canton (the way along which you must have come) was nothing but a slough at all seasons of the year.

"Political events and revolutions had never reached this inaccessible country—it lay completely beyond the limits of social stir and change. Napoleon's name, and his alone, had penetrated hither; he is held in great veneration, thanks to one or two old soldiers who have returned to their native homes, and who of evenings tell marvelous tales about his adventures and his armies for the benefit of these simple folk. Their coming back is, moreover, a puzzle that no one can explain. Before I came here, the young men who went into the army all stayed in it for good. This fact in itself is a sufficient revelation of the wretched condition of the country. I need not give you a detailed description of it.

"This, then, was the state of things when I first came to the canton, which has several contented, well-tilled, and fairly prosperous communes belonging to it upon the other side of the mountains. I will say nothing about the hovels in the town; they were neither more nor less than stables, in which men and animals were indiscriminately huddled together. As there was no inn in the place, I was obliged to ask the curate for a bed, he being in possession, for the time being, of this house, then offered for sale. Putting to him question after question, I came to have some slight knowledge of the lamentable condition of the country with the pleasant climate, the fertile soil, and the natural productiveness that had impressed me so much.

"At that time, sir, I was seeking to shape a future for myself that should be as little as possible like the troubled life that had left me weary; and one of those thoughts came into my mind that God gives to us at times, to enable us to take up our burdens and bear them. I resolved to develop all the resources of this country, just as a tutor develops the capacities of a child. Do not think too much of my benevolence; the pressing need that I felt for turning my thoughts into fresh channels entered too much into my motives. I had determined to give up the remainder of my life to some difficult task. A lifetime would be required to bring about the needful changes in a canton that Nature had made so wealthy,

and man so poor; and I was tempted by the practical difficulties that stood in the way. As soon as I found that I could secure the curé's house and plenty of waste land at a small cost, I solemnly devoted myself to the calling of a country surgeon—the very last position that a man aspires to take. I determined to become the friend of the poor, and to expect no reward of any kind from them. Oh! I did not indulge in any illusions as to the nature of the country people, nor as to the hindrances that lie in the way of every attempt to bring about a better state of things among men or their surroundings. I have never made idyllic pictures of my people; I have taken them at their just worth—as poor peasants, neither wholly good nor wholly bad, whose constant toil never allows them to indulge in emotion, though they can feel acutely at times. Above all things, in fact, I clearly understood that I should do nothing with them except through an appeal to their selfish interests, and by schemes for their immediate well-being. The peasants are one and all the sons of St. Thomas, the doubting apostle—they always like words to be supported by visible facts.

"Perhaps you will laugh at my first start, sir," the doctor went on after a pause. "I began my difficult enterprise by introducing the manufacture of baskets. The poor folks used to buy the wicker mats on which they drain their cheeses, and all the baskets needed for the insignificant trade of the district. I suggested to an intelligent young fellow that he might take on lease a good-sized piece of land by the side of the torrent. Every year the floods deposited a rich alluvial soil on this spot, where there should be no difficulty in growing osiers. I reckoned out the quantity of wicker-work of various kinds required from time to time by the canton, and went over to Grenoble, where I found out a young craftsman, a clever worker, but without any capital. When I had discovered him, I soon made up my mind to set him up in business here. I undertook to advance the money for the osiers required for his work until my osier-farmer should be in a position to supply him. I induced him to sell his baskets at

rather lower prices than they asked for them in Grenoble, while, at the same time, they were better made. He entered into my views completely. The osier-beds and the basket-making were two business speculations whose results were only appreciated after the lapse of four years. Of course, you know that osiers must be three years old before they are fit to cut.

"At the commencement of operations, the basket-maker was boarded and lodged gratuitously. Before very long he married a woman from Saint Laurent du Pont, who had a little money. Then he had a house built, in a healthy and very airy situation which I chose, and my advice was followed as to the internal arrangements. Here was a triumph! I had created a new industry, and had brought a producer and several workers into the town. I wonder if you will regard my elation as childish?

"For the first few days after my basket-maker had set up his business, I never went past his shop but my heart beat somewhat faster. And when I saw the newly-built house, with the green-painted shutters, the vine beside the doorway, and the bench and bundles of osiers before it; when I saw a tidy, neatly-dressed woman within it, nursing a plump, pink and white baby among the workmen, who were singing merrily and busily plaiting their wicker-work under the superintendence of a man who but lately had looked so pinched and pale, but now had an atmosphere of prosperity about him; when I saw all this, I confess that I could not forego the pleasure of turning basket-maker for a moment, of going into the shop to hear how things went with them, and of giving myself up to a feeling of content that I cannot express in words, for I had all their happiness as well as my own to make me glad. All my hopes became centered on this house, where the man dwelt who had been the first to put a steady faith in me. Like the basket-maker's wife, clasping her first nursling to her breast, did not I already fondly cherish the hopes of the future of this poor district?

"I had to do so many things at once," he went on, "I came

into collision with other people's notions, and met with violent opposition, fomented by the ignorant mayor to whose office I had succeeded, and whose influence had dwindled away as mine increased. I determined to make him my deputy, and a confederate in my schemes of benevolence. Yes, in the first place, I endeavored to instil enlightened ideas into the densest of all heads. Through his self-love and cupidity I gained a hold upon my man. During six months, as we dined together, I took him deeply into my confidence about my projected improvements. Many people would think this intimacy one of the most painful inflictions in the course of my task; but was he not a tool of the most valuable kind? Woe to him who despises his axe, or flings it carelessly aside! Would it not have been very inconsistent, moreover, if I, who wished to improve a district, had shrunk back at the thought of improving one man in it?

"A road was our first and most pressing need in bringing about a better state of things. If we could obtain permission from the Municipal Council to make a hard road, so as to put us in communication with the highway to Grenoble, the deputy-mayor would be the first gainer by it; for instead of dragging his timber over rough tracks at a great expense, a good road through the canton would enable him to transport it more easily, and to engage in a traffic on a large scale, in all kinds of wood, that would bring in money—not a miserable six hundred francs a year, but handsome sums which would mean a certain fortune for him some day. Convinced at last, he became my proselytizer.

"Through the whole of one winter the ex-mayor got into the way of explaining to our citizens that a good road for wheeled traffic would be a source of wealth to the whole country round, for it would enable every one to do a trade with Grenoble; he held forth on this head at the tavern while drinking with his intimates. When the Municipal Council had authorized the making of the road, I went to the prefect and obtained some money from the charitable funds at the disposal of the department, in order to pay for the hire of

carts, for the Commune was unable to undertake the transport of road metal for lack of wheeled conveyances. The ignorant began to murmur against me, and to say that I wanted to bring the days of the *corvée* back again; this made me anxious to finish this important work, that they might speedily appreciate its benefits. With this end in view, every Sunday during my first year of office I drew the whole population of the township, willing or unwilling, up on to the mountain, where I myself had traced out on a hard bottom the road between our village and the highway to Grenoble. Materials for making it were fortunately to be had in plenty all along the site.

"The tedious enterprise called for a great deal of patience on my part. Some who were ignorant of the law would refuse at times to give their contribution of labor; others, again, who had not bread to eat, really could not afford to lose a day. Corn had to be distributed among these last, and the others must be soothed with friendly words. Yet by the time we had finished two-thirds of the road, which in all is about two leagues in length, the people had so thoroughly recognized its advantages, that the remaining third was accomplished with a spirit that surprised me. I added to the future wealth of the Commune by planting a double row of poplars along the ditch on either side of the way. The trees are already almost worth a fortune, and they make our road look like a king's highway. It is almost always dry, by reason of its position, and it was so well made that the annual cost of maintaining it is a bare two hundred francs. I must show it to you, for you cannot have seen it; you must have come by the picturesque way along the valley bottom, a road which the people decided to make for themselves three years later, so as to connect the various farms that were made there at that time. In three years ideas had rooted themselves in the common sense of this township, hitherto so lacking in intelligence that a passing traveler would perhaps have thought it hopeless to attempt to instil them. But to continue.

"The establishment of the basket-maker was an example

set before these poverty-stricken folk that they might profit by it. And if the road was to be a direct cause of the future wealth of the canton, all the primary forms of industry must be stimulated, or these two germs of a better state of things would come to nothing. My own work went forward by slow degrees, as I helped my osier farmer and wicker-worker and saw to the making of the road.

"I had two horses, and the timber merchant, the deputy-mayor, had three. He could only have them shod whenever he went over to Grenoble, so I induced a farrier to take up his abode here, and undertook to find him plenty of work. On the same day I met with a discharged soldier, who had nothing but his pension of a hundred francs, and was sufficiently perplexed about his future. He could read and write, so I engaged him as secretary to the mayor; as it happened, I was lucky enough to find a wife for him, and his dreams of happiness were fulfilled.

"Both of these new families needed houses, as well as the basket-maker and twenty-two others from the crétin village, soon afterwards twelve more households were established in the place. The workers in each of these families were at once producers and consumers. They were masons, carpenters, joiners, slaters, blacksmiths, and glaziers; and there was work enough to last them for a long time, for had they not their own houses to build when they had finished those for other people? Seventy, in fact, were built in the Commune during my second year of office. One form of production demands another. The additions to the population of the township had created fresh wants, hitherto unknown among these dwellers in poverty. The wants gave rise to industries, and industries to trade, and the gains of trade raised the standard of comfort, which in its turn gave them practical ideas.

"The various workmen wished to buy their bread ready baked, so we came to have a baker. Buckwheat could no longer be the food of a population which, awakened from its lethargy, had become essentially active. They lived on buck-

wheat when I first came among them, and I wished to effect a change to rye, or a mixture of rye and wheat in the first instance, and finally to see a loaf of white bread even in the poorest household. Intellectual progress to my thinking was entirely dependent on a general improvement in the conditions of life. The presence of a butcher in a district says as much for its intelligence as for its wealth. The worker feeds himself, and a man who feeds himself thinks. I had made a very careful study of the soil, for I foresaw a time when it would be necessary to grow wheat. I was sure of launching the place in a very prosperous agricultural career, and of doubling the population, when once it had begun to work. And now the time had come.

"M. Gravier, of Grenoble, owned a great deal of land in the Commune, which brought him in no rent, but which might be turned into corn-growing land. He is the head of a department in the Prefecture, as you know. It was a kindness for his own countryside quite as much as my earnest entreaties that won him over. He had very benevolently yielded to my importunities on former occasions, and I succeeded in making it clear to him that in so doing he had wrought unconsciously for his own benefit. After several days spent in pleadings, consultation, and talk, the matter was thrashed out. I undertook to guarantee him against all risks in the undertaking, from which his wife, a woman of no imagination, sought to frighten him. He agreed to build four farmhouses with a hundred acres of land attached to each, and promised to advance the sums required to pay for clearing the ground, for seeds, ploughing gear, and cattle, and for making occupation roads.

"I myself also started two farms, quite as much for the sake of bringing my waste land into cultivation as with a view to giving an object-lesson in the use of modern methods in agriculture. In six weeks' time the population of the town increased to three hundred people. Homes for several families must be built on the six farms; there was a vast quantity of land to be broken up; the work called for laborers. Wheel-

wrights, drainmakers, journeymen, and laborers of all kinds flocked in. The road to Grenoble was covered with carts that came and went. All the countryside was astir. The circulation of money had made every one anxious to earn it, apathy had ceased, the place had awakened.

"The story of M. Gravier, one of those who did so much for this canton, can be concluded in a few words. In spite of cautious misgivings, not unnatural in a man occupying an official position in a provincial town, he advanced more than forty thousand francs, on the faith of my promises, without knowing whether he should ever see them back again. To-day every one of his farms is let for a thousand francs. His tenants have thriven so well that each of them owns at least a hundred acres, three hundred sheep, twenty cows, ten oxen, and five horses, and employs more than twenty persons.

"But to resume. Our farms were ready by the end of the fourth year. Our wheat harvest seemed miraculous to the people in the district, heavy as the first crop off the land ought to be. How often during that year I trembled for the success of my work! Rain or dought might spoil everything by diminishing the belief in me that was already felt. When we began to grow wheat, it necessitated the mill that you have seen, which brings me in about five hundred francs a year. So the peasants say that 'there is luck about me' (that is the way they put it), and believe in me as they believe in their relics. These new undertakings—the farms, the mill, the plantations, and the roads—have given employment to all the various kinds of workers whom I had called in. Although the buildings fully represent the value of the sixty thousand francs of capital, which we sunk in the district, the outlay was more than returned to us by the profits on the sales which the consumers occasioned. I never ceased my efforts to put vigor into this industrial life which was just beginning. A nurseryman took my advice and came to settle in the place, and I preached wholesome doctrine to the poor concerning the planting of fruit trees, in order that some day they should obtain a monopoly of the sale of fruit in Grenoble.

"'You take your cheeses there as it is,' I used to tell them, 'why not take poultry, eggs, vegetables, game, hay and straw, and so forth?' All my counsels were a source of fortune; it was a question of who should follow them first. A number of little businesses were started; they went on at first but slowly, but from day to day their progress became more rapid; and now sixty carts full of the various products of the district set out every Monday for Grenoble, and there is more buckwheat grown for poultry food than they used to sow for human consumption. The trade in timber grew to be so considerable that it was subdivided, and since the fourth year of our industrial era, we have had dealers in firewood, squared timber, planks, bark, and later on, in charcoal. In the end four new sawmills were set up, to turn out the planks and beams of timber.

"When the ex-mayor had acquired a few business notions, he felt the necessity of learning to read and write. He compared the prices that were asked for wood in various neighborhoods, and found such differences in his favor, that he secured new customers in one place after another, and now a third of the trade in the department passes through his hands. There has been such a sudden increase in our traffic that we find constant work for three wagon-builders and two harness-makers, each of them employing three hands at least. Lastly, the quantity of ironware that we use is so large that an agricultural implement and tool-maker has removed into the town, and is very well satisfied with the result.

"The desire of gain develops a spirit of ambition, which has ever since impelled our workers to extend their field from the township to the canton, and from the canton to the department, so as to increase their profits by increasing their sales. I had only to say a word to point out new openings to them, and their own sense did the rest. Four years had been sufficient to change the face of the township. When I had come through it first, I did not catch the slightest sound; but in less than five years from that time, there was life and bustle everywhere. The gay songs, the shrill or murmuring sounds

made by the tools in the workshops rang pleasantly in my ears. I watched the comings and goings of a busy population congregated in the clean and wholesome new town, where plenty of trees had been planted. Every one of them seemed conscious of a happy lot, every face shone with the content that comes through a life of useful toil.

"I look upon these five years as the first epoch of prosperity in the history of our town," the doctor went on after a pause. "During that time I have prepared the ground and sowed the seed in men's minds as well as in the land. Henceforward industrial progress could not be stayed, the population was bound to go forward. A second epoch was about to begin. This little world very soon desired to be better clad. A shoemaker came, and with him a haberdasher, a tailor, and a hatter. This dawn of luxury brought us a butcher and a grocer, and a midwife, who became very necessary to me, for I lost a great deal of time over maternity cases. The stubbed wastes yielded excellent harvests, and the superior quality of our agricultural produce was maintained through the increased supply of manure. My enterprise could now develop itself; everything followed on quite naturally.

"When the houses had been rendered wholesome, and their inmates gradually persuaded to feed and clothe themselves better, I wanted the dumb animals to feel the benefit of these beginnings of civilization. All the excellence of cattle, whether as a race or as individuals, and, in consequence, the quality of the milk and meat, depends upon the care that is expended upon them. I took the sanitation of cowsheds for the text of my sermons. I showed them how an animal that is properly housed and well cared for is more profitable than a lean neglected beast, and the comparison wrought a gradual change for the better in the lot of the cattle in the Commune. Not one of them was ill treated. The cows and oxen were rubbed down as in Switzerland and Auvergne. Sheep-folds, stables, byres, dairies, and barns were rebuilt after the pattern of the roomy, well-ventilated, and conse-

quently healthy steadings that M. Gravier and I had constructed. Our tenants became my apostles. They made rapid converts of unbelievers, demonstrating the soundness of my doctrines by their prompt results. I lent money to those who needed it, giving the preference to hardworking poor people, because they served as an example. Any unsound or sickly cattle or beasts of poor quality were quickly disposed of by my advice, and replaced by fine specimens. In this way our dairy produce came, in time, to command higher prices in the market than that sent by other communes. We had splendid herds, and as a consequence, capital leather.

"This step forward was of great importance, and in this wise. In rural economy nothing can be regarded as trifling. Our hides used to fetch scarcely anything, and the leather we made was of little value, but when once our leather and hides were improved, tanneries were easily established along the waterside. We became tanners, and business rapidly increased.

"Wine, properly speaking, had been hitherto unknown; a thin, sour beverage like verjuice had been their only drink, but now wineshops were established to supply a natural demand. The oldest tavern was enlarged and transformed into an inn, which furnished mules to pilgrims to the Grande Chartreuse who began to come our way, and after two years there was enough business for two innkeepers.

"The justice of the peace died just as our second prosperous epoch began, and luckily for us, his successor had formerly been a notary in Grenoble who had lost most of his fortune by a bad speculation, though enough of it yet remained to cause him to be looked upon in the village as a wealthy man. It was M. Gravier who induced him to settle among us. He built himself a comfortable house and helped me by uniting his efforts to mine. He also laid out a farm, and broke up and cleaned some of the waste land, and at this moment he has three chalets up above on the mountain side. He has a large family. He dismissed the old registrar and the clerk, and in their place installed better-educated men, who worked

far harder, moreover, than their predecessors had done. One of the heads of these two new households started a distillery of potato-spirit, and the other was a wool-washer; each combined these occupations with his official work, and in this way two valuable industries were created among us.

"Now that the Commune had some revenues of its own, no opposition was raised in any quarter when they were spent on building a town-hall, with a free school for elementary education in the building and accommodation for a teacher. For this important post I had selected a poor priest who had taken the oath, and had therefore been cast out by the department, and who at last found a refuge among us for his old age. The schoolmistress is a very worthy woman who had lost all that she had, and was in great distress. We made up a nice little sum for her, and she has just opened a boarding-school for girls to which the wealthy farmers hereabouts are beginning to send their daughters.

"If so far, sir, I have been entitled to tell you the story of my own doings as the chronicle of this little spot of earth, I have reached the point where M. Janvier, the new parson, began to divide the work of regeneration with me. He has been a second Fénelon, unknown beyond the narrow limits of a country parish, and by some secret of his own has infused a spirit of brotherliness and of charity among these folk that has made them almost like one large family. M. Dufau, the justice of the peace, was a later comer, but he in an equal degree deserves the gratitude of the people here.

"I will put the whole position before you in figures that will make it clearer than any words of mine. At this moment the Commune owns two hundred acres of woodland, and a hundred and sixty acres of meadow. Without running up the rates, we give a hundred crowns to supplement the curé's stipend, we pay two hundred francs to the rural policeman, and as much again to the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. The maintenance of the roads costs us five hundred francs, while necessary repairs to the townhall, the parsonage, and the church, with some few other expenses, also amount

to a similar sum. In fifteen years' time there will be a thousand francs worth of wood to fell for every hundred francs' worth cut now, and the taxes will not cost the inhabitants a penny. This Commune is bound to become one of the richest in France. But perhaps I am taxing your patience, sir?" said Benassis, suddenly discovering that his companion wore such a pensive expression that it seemed as though his attention was wandering.

"No! no!" answered the commandant.

"Our trade, handicrafts, and agriculture so far only supplied the needs of the district," the doctor went on. "As a certain point our prosperity came to a standstill. I wanted a post-office, and sellers of tobacco, stationery, powder and shot. The receiver of taxes had hitherto preferred to live elsewhere, but now I succeeded in persuading him to take up his abode in the town, holding out as inducements the pleasantness of the place and of the new society. As time and place permitted I had succeeded in producing a supply of everything for which I had first created a need, in attracting families of hardworking people into the district, and in implanting a desire to own land in them all. So by degrees, as they saved a little money, the waste land began to be broken up; spade husbandry and small holdings increased; so did the value of property on the mountain.

"Those struggling folk who, when I knew them first, used to walk over to Grenoble carrying their few cheeses for sale, now made the journey comfortably in a cart, and took fruit, eggs, chickens and turkeys, and before they were aware of it, every one was a little richer. Even those who came off worst had a garden at any rate, and grew early vegetables and fruit. It become the children's work to watch the cattle in the fields, and at last it was found to be a waste of time to bake bread at home. Here were signs of prosperity!

"But if this place was to be a permanent forge of industry, fuel must be constantly added to the fire. The town had not as yet a renascent industry which could maintain this commercial process, an industry which should make great trans-

actions, a warehouse, and a market necessary. It is not enough that a country should lose none of the money that forms its capital; you will not increase its prosperity by more or less ingenious devices for causing this amount to circulate, by means of production and consumption, through the greatest possible number of hands. That is not where your problem lies. When a country is fully developed and its production keeps pace with its consumption, if private wealth is to increase as well as the wealth of the community at large, there must be exchanges with other communities, which will keep a balance on the right side of the balance-sheet. This thought has led states with a limited territorial basis like Tyre, Carthage, Venice, Holland, and England, for instance, to secure the carrying trade. I cast about for some such notion as this to apply to our little world, so as to inaugurate a third commercial epoch. Our town is so much like any other, that our prosperity was scarcely visible to a passing stranger; it was only for me that it was astonishing. The folk had come together by degrees; they themselves were a part of the change, and could not judge of its effects as a whole.

"Seven years had gone by when I met with two strangers, the real benefactors of the place, which perhaps some day they will transform into a large town. One of them is a Tyrolese, an exceedingly clever fellow, who makes rough shoes for country people's wear, and boots for people of fashion in Grenoble as no one can make them, not even in Paris itself. He was a poor strolling musician, who, singing and working, had made his way through Italy; one of those busy Germans who fashion the tools of their own work, and make the instrument that they play upon. When he came to the town he asked if any one wanted a pair of shoes. They sent him to me, and I gave him an order for two pairs of boots, for which he made his own lasts. The foreigner's skill surprised me. He gave accurate and consistent answers to the questions I put, and his face and manner confirmed the good opinion I had formed of him. I suggested that he

should settle in the place, undertaking to assist him in business in every way that I could; in fact, I put a fairly large sum of money at his disposal. He accepted my offer. I had my own ideas in this. The quality of our leather had improved; and why should we not use it ourselves, and before very long make our own shoes at moderate prices?

"It was the basket-maker's business over again on a larger scale. Chance had put an exceedingly clever hard-working man in my way, and he must be retained so that a steady and profitable trade might be given to the place. There is a constant demand for foot-gear, and a very slight difference in price is felt at once by the purchaser.

"This was my reasoning, sir, and fortunately events have justified it. At this time we have five tanyards, each of which has its bark-mill. They take all the hides produced in the department itself, and even draw part of their supply from Provence; and yet the Tyrolese uses more leather than they can produce, and has forty work-people in his employ!

"I happened on the other man after a fashion no whit less strange, but you might find the story tedious. He is just an ordinary peasant, who discovered a cheaper way of making the great broad-brimmed hats that are worn in this part of the world. He sells them in other cantons, and even sends them into Switzerland and Savoy. So long as the quality and the low prices can be maintained, here are two inexhaustible sources of wealth for the canton, which suggested to my mind the idea of establishing three fairs in the year. The prefect, amazed at our industrial progress, lent his aid in obtaining the royal ordinance which authorized them, and last year we held our three fairs. They are known as far as Savoy as the Shoe Fair and the Hat Fair.

"The head clerk of a notary in Grenoble heard of these changes. He was poor, but he is a well-educated, hard-working young fellow, and Mlle. Gravier was engaged to be married to him. He went to Paris to ask for an authorization to establish himself here as a notary, and his request was granted. As he had not had to pay for his appointment, he

could afford to build a house in the market square of the new town, opposite the house of the justice of the peace. We have a market once a week, and a considerable amount of business is transacted in corn and cattle.

"Next year a druggist surely ought to come among us, and next we want a clockmaker, a furniture dealer, and a bookseller; and so, by degrees, we shall have all the desirable luxuries of life. Who knows but that at last we shall have a number of substantial houses, and give ourselves all the airs of a small city? Education has made such strides that there has never been any opposition made at the council-board when I proposed that we should restore our church and build a parsonage; nor when I brought forward a plan for laying out a fine open space, planted with trees, where the fairs could be held, and a further scheme for a survey of the township, so that its future streets should be wholesome, spacious, and wisely planned.

"This is how we came to have nineteen hundred hearths in the place of a hundred and thirty-seven; three thousand head of cattle instead of eight hundred; and for a population of seven hundred, no less than two thousand persons are living in the township, or three thousand, if the people down the valley are included. There are twelve houses belonging to wealthy people in the Commune, there are a hundred well-to-do families, and two hundred more which are thriving. The rest have their own exertions to look to. Every one knows how to read and write, and we subscribe to seventeen different newspapers.

"We have poor people still among us—there are far too many of them, in fact; but we have no beggars, and there is work enough for all. I have so many patients that my daily round taxes the powers of two horses. I can go anywhere for five miles round at any hour without fear; for if any one was minded to fire a shot at me, his life would not be worth ten minutes' purchase. The undemonstrative affection of the people is my sole gain from all these changes, except the radiant 'Good-day, M. Benassis,' that every one

gives me as I pass. You will understand, of course, that the wealth incidentally acquired through my model farms has only been a means and not an end."

"If every one followed your example in other places, sir, France would be great indeed, and might laugh at the rest of Europe!" cried Genestas enthusiastically.

"But I have kept you out here for half an hour," said Benassis; "it is growing dark, let us go in to dinner."

The doctor's house, on the side facing the garden, consists of a ground floor and a single story, with a row of five windows in each; dormer windows also project from the tiled mansard-roof. The green-painted shutters are in startling contrast with the gray tones of the walls. A vine wanders along the whole side of the house, a pleasant strip of green like a frieze, between the two stories. A few struggling Bengal roses make shift to live as best they may, half drowned at times by the drippings from the gutterless eaves.

As you enter the large vestibule, the salon lies to your right; it contains four windows, two of which look into the yard, and two into the garden. Ceiling and wainscot are paneled, and the walls are hung with seventeenth century tapestry—pathetic evidence that the room had been the object of the late owner's aspiration, and that he had lavished all that he could spare upon it. The great roomy armchairs, covered with brocaded damask; the old-fashioned, gilded candle-sconces above the chimney-piece, and the window curtains with their heavy tassels, showed that the curé had been a wealthy man. Benassis had made some additions to this furniture, which was not without a character of its own. He had placed two smaller tables, decorated with carved wooden garlands, between the windows on opposite sides of the room, and had put a clock, in a case of tortoise shell, inlaid with copper, upon the mantel-shelf. The doctor seldom occupied the salon; its atmosphere was damp and close, like that of a room that is always kept shut. Memories of the dead curé still lingered about it; the peculiar scent of his

tobacco seemed to pervade the corner by the hearth where he had been wont to sit. The two great easy-chairs were symmetrically arranged on either side of the fire, which had not been lighted since the time of M. Gravier's visit; the bright flames from the pine logs lighted the room.

"The evenings are chilly even now," said Benassis; "it is pleasant to see a fire."

Genestas was meditating. He was beginning to understand the doctor's indifference to his every-day surroundings.

"It is surprising to me, sir, that you, who possess real public spirit, should have made no effort to enlighten the Government, after accomplishing so much."

Benassis began to laugh, but without bitterness; he said, rather sadly:

"You mean that I should draw up some sort of memorial on various ways of civilizing France? You are not the first to suggest it, sir; M. Gravier has forestalled you. Unluckily, Governments cannot be enlightened, and a Government which regards itself as a diffuser of light is the least open to enlightenment. What we have done for our canton, every mayor ought, of course, to do for his; the magistrate should work for his town, the sub-prefect for his district, the prefect for the department, and the minister for France, each acting in his own sphere of interest. For the few miles of country road that I persuaded our people to make, another would succeed in constructing a canal or a highway; and for my encouragement of the peasants' trade in hats, a minister would emancipate France from the industrial yoke of the foreigner by encouraging the manufacture of clocks in different places, by helping to bring to perfection our iron and steel, our tools and appliances, or by bringing silk or dyer's woad into cultivation.

"In commerce, 'encouragement' does not mean protection. A really wise policy should aim at making a country independent of foreign supply, but this should be effected without resorting to the pitiful shifts of customs duties and prohibitions. Industries must work out their own salvation, compe-

tition is the life of trade. A protected industry goes to sleep, and monopoly, like the protective tariff, kills it outright. The country upon which all others depend for their supplies will be the land which will promulgate free trade, for it will be conscious of its power to produce its manufactures at prices lower than those of any of its competitors. France is in a better position to attain this end than England, for France alone possesses an amount of territory sufficiently extensive to maintain a supply of agricultural produce at prices that will enable the worker to live on low wages; the Administration should keep this end in view, for therein lies the whole modern question. I have not devoted my life to this study, dear sir; I found my work by accident, and late in the day. Such simple things as these are too slight, moreover, to build into a system; there is nothing wonderful about them, they do not lend themselves to theories; it is their misfortune to be merely practically useful. And then work cannot be done quickly. The man who means to succeed in these ways must daily look to find within himself the stock of courage needed for the day, a courage in reality of the rarest kind, though it does not seem hard to practise, and meets with little recognition—the courage of the schoolmaster, who must say the same things over and over again. We all honor the man who has shed his blood on the battlefield, as you have done; but we ridicule this other whose life-fire is slowly consumed in repeating the same words to children of the same age. There is no attraction for any of us in obscure well-doing. We know nothing of the civic virtue that led the great men of ancient times to serve their country in the lowest rank whenever they did not command. Our age is afflicted with a disease that makes each of us seek to rise above his fellows, and there are more saints than shrines among us.

"This is how it has come to pass. The monarchy fell, and we lost Honor, Christian Virtue faded with the religion of our forefathers, and our own ineffectual attempts at government have destroyed Patriotism. Ideas can never utterly perish, so these beliefs linger on in our midst, but they do

not influence the great mass of the people, and Society has no support but Egoism. Every individual believes in himself. For us the future means egoism; further than that we cannot see. The great man who shall save us from the shipwreck which is imminent will no doubt avail himself of individualism when he makes a nation of us once more; but until this regeneration comes, we bide our time in a materialistic and utilitarian age. Utilitarianism—to this conclusion we have come. We are all rated, not at our just worth, but according to our social importance. People will scarcely look at an energetic man if he is in shirt-sleeves. The Government itself is pervaded by this idea. A minister sends a paltry medal to a sailor who has saved a dozen lives at the risk of his own, while the deputy who sells his vote to those in power receives the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

"Woe to a people made up of such men as these! For nations, like men, owe all the strength and vitality that is in them to noble thoughts and aspirations, and men's feelings shape their faith. But when self-interest has taken the place of faith, and each one of us thinks only of himself, and believes in himself alone, how can you expect to find among us much of that civil courage whose very essence consists in self-renunciation? The same principle underlies both military and civil courage, although you soldiers are called upon to yield your lives up once and for all, while ours are given slowly drop by drop, and the battle is the same for both, although it takes different forms.

"The man who would fain civilize the lowliest spot on earth needs something besides wealth for the task. Knowledge is still more necessary; and knowledge, and patriotism, and integrity are worthless unless they are accompanied by a firm determination on his part to set his own personal interests completely aside, and to devote himself to a social idea. France, no doubt, possesses more than one well-educated man and more than one patriot in every commune; but I am fully persuaded that not every canton can produce a man who to these valuable qualifications unites the unflagging will and pertinacity with which a blacksmith hammers out iron.

"The Destroyer and the Builder are two manifestations of Will: the one prepares the way, and the other accomplishes the work; the first appears in the guise of a spirit of evil, and the second seems like the spirit of good. Glory falls to the Destroyer, while the Builder is forgotten; for evil makes a noise in the world that rouses little souls to admiration, while good deeds are slow to make themselves heard. Self-love leads us to prefer the more conspicuous part. If it should happen that any public work is undertaken without an interested motive, it will only be by accident, until the day when education has changed our ways of regarding things in France.

"Yet suppose that this change had come to pass, and that all of us were public-spirited citizens; in spite of our comfortable lives among trivialities, should we not be in a fair way to become the most wearied, wearisome, and unfortunate race of philistines under the sun?

"I am not at the helm of State, the decision of great questions of this kind is not within my province; but, setting these considerations aside, there are other difficulties in the way of laying down hard and fast rules as to government. In the matter of civilization, everything is relative. Ideas that suit one country admirably are fatal in another—men's minds are as various as the soils of the globe. If we have so often been ill governed, it is because a faculty for government, like taste, is the outcome of a very rare and lofty attitude of mind. The qualifications for the work are found in a natural bent of the soul rather than in the possession of scientific formulæ. No one need fear, however, to call himself a statesman, for his actions and motives cannot be justly estimated; his real judges are far away, and the results of his deeds are even more remote. We have a great respect here in France for men of ideas—a keen intellect exerts a great attraction for us; but ideas are of little value where a resolute will is the one thing needful. Administration, as a matter of fact, does not consist in forcing more or less wise methods and ideas upon the great mass of the nation, but in giving

to the ideas, good or bad, that they already possess a practical turn which will make them conduce to the general welfare of the State. If old-established prejudices and customs bring a country into a bad way, the people will renounce their errors of their own accord. Are not losses the result of economical errors of every kind? And is it not, therefore, to every one's interest to rectify them in the long run?

"Luckily I found a *tabula rasa* in this district. They have followed my advice, and the land is well cultivated; but there had been no previous errors in agriculture, and the soil was good to begin with, so that it has been easy to introduce the five-ply shift, artificial grasses, and potatoes. My methods did not clash with people's prejudices. The faultily constructed plowshares in use in some parts of France were unknown here, the hoe sufficed for the little field work that they did. Our wheelwright extolled my wheeled plows because he wished to increase his own business, so I secured an ally in him; but in this matter, as in all others, I sought to make the good of one conduce to the good of all.

"Then I turned my attention to another kind of production, that should increase the welfare rather than the wealth of these poor folk. I have brought nothing from without into this district; I have simply encouraged the people to seek beyond its limits for a market for their produce, a measure that could not but increase their prosperity in a way that they felt immediately. They had no idea of the fact, but they themselves were my apostles, and their works preached my doctrines. Something else must also be borne in mind. We are barely five leagues from Grenoble. There is plenty of demand in a large city for produce of all kinds, but not every commune is situated at the gates of a city. In every similar undertaking the nature, situation, and resources of the country must be taken into consideration, and a careful study must be made of the soil, of the people themselves, and of many other things; and no one should expect to have vines grow in Normandy. So no tasks can be more various

than those of government, and its general principles must be few in number. The law is uniform, but not so the land and the minds and customs of those who dwell in it; and the administration of the law is the art of carrying it out in such a manner that no injury is done to people's interests. Every place must be considered separately.

"On the other side of the mountain at the foot of which our deserted village lies, they find it impossible to use wheeled plows, because the soil is not deep enough. Now if the mayor of the commune were to take it into his head to follow in our footsteps, he would be the ruin of his neighborhood. I advised him to plant vineyards; they had a capital vintage last year in the little district, and their wine is exchanged for our corn.

"Then, lastly, it must be remembered that my words carried a certain weight with the people to whom I preached, and that we were continually brought into close contact. I cured my peasants' complaints; an easy task, for a nourishing diet is, as a rule, all that is needed to restore them to health and strength. Either through thrift, or through sheer poverty, the country people starve themselves; any illness among them is caused in this way, and as a rule they enjoy very fair health.

"When I first decided to devote myself to this life of obscure renunciation, I was in doubt for a long while whether to become a curé, a country doctor, or a justice of the peace. It is not without reason that people speak collectively of the priest, the lawyer, and the doctor as 'men of the black robe' —so the saying goes. The first heals the wounds of the soul, the second those of the purse, and the third those of the body. They represent the three principal elements necessary to the existence of society—conscience, property, and health. At one time the first, and at a later period the second, was all-important in the State. Our predecessors on this earth thought, perhaps not without reason, that the priest, who prescribed what men should think, ought to be paramount; so the priest was king, pontiff, and judge in one, for in those

days belief and faith were everything. All this has been changed in our day; and we must even take our epoch as we find it. But I, for one, believe that the progress of civilization and the welfare of the people depend on these three men. They are the three powers who bring home to the people's minds the ways in which facts, interests, and principles affect them. They themselves are three great results produced in the midst of the nation by the operation of events, by the ownership of property, and by the growth of ideas. Time goes on and brings changes to pass, property increases or diminishes in men's hands, all the various readjustments have to be duly regulated, and in this way principles of social order are established. If civilization is to spread itself, and production is to be increased, the people must be made to understand the way in which the interests of the individual harmonize with national interests which resolve themselves into facts, interests, and principles. As these three professions are bound to deal with these issues of human life, it seemed to me that they must be the most powerful civilizing agencies of our time. They alone afford to a man of wealth the opportunity of mitigating the fate of the poor, with whom they daily bring him in contact.

"The peasant is always more willing to listen to the man who lays down rules for saving him from bodily ills than to the priest who exhorts him to save his soul. The first speaker can talk of this earth, the scene of the peasant's labors, while the priest is bound to talk to him of heaven, with which, unfortunately, the peasant nowadays concerns himself very little indeed; I say unfortunately, because the doctrine of a future life is not only a consolation, but a means by which men may be governed. Is not religion the one power that sanctions social laws? We have but lately vindicated the existence of God. In the absence of a religion, the Government was driven to invent the Terror, in order to carry its laws into effect; but the terror was the fear of man, and it has passed away.

"When a peasant is ill, when he is forced to lie on his

pallet, and while he is recovering, he cannot help himself, he is forced to listen to logical reasoning, which he can understand quite well if it is put clearly before him. This thought made a doctor of me. My calculations for the peasants were made along with them. I never gave advice unless I was quite sure of the results, and in this way compelled them to admit the wisdom of my views. The people require infallibility. Infallibility was the making of Napoleon; he would have been a god if he had not filled the world with the sound of his fall at Waterloo. If Mahomet founded a permanent religion after conquering the third part of the globe, it was by dint of concealing his deathbed from the crowd. The same rules hold good for the great conqueror and for the provincial mayor, and a nation or a commune is much the same sort of crowd; indeed, the great multitude of mankind is the same everywhere.

"I have been exceedingly firm with those whom I have helped with money; if I had not been inflexible on this point, they all would have laughed at me. Peasants, no less than worldlings, end by despising the man that they can deceive. He has been cheated? Clearly, then, he must have been weak; and it is might alone that governs the world. I have never charged a penny for my professional advice, except to those who were evidently rich people; but I have not allowed the value of my services to be overlooked at all, and I always make them pay for medicine unless the patient is exceedingly poor. If my peasants do not pay me in money, they are quite aware that they are in my debt; sometimes they satisfy their consciences by bringing oats for my horses, or corn, when it is cheap. But if the miller were to send me some eels as a return for my advice, I should tell him that he is too generous for such a small matter. My politeness bears fruit. In the winter I shall have some sacks of flour for the poor. Ah! sir, they have kind hearts, these people, if one does not slight them, and to-day I think more good and less evil of them than I did formerly."

"What a deal of trouble you have taken!" said Genestas.

"Not at all," answered Benassis. "It was no more trouble to say something useful than to chatter about trifles; and whether I chatted or joked, the talk always turned on them and their concerns wherever I went. They would not listen to me at first. I had to overcome their dislikes; I belonged to the middle classes—that is to say, I was a natural enemy. I found the struggle amusing. An easy or an uneasy conscience—that is all the difference that lies between doing well or ill; the trouble is the same in either case. If scoundrels would but behave themselves properly, they might be millionaires instead of being hanged. That is all."

"The dinner is growing cold, sir!" cried Jacquotte, in the doorway.

Genestas caught the doctor's arm.

"I have only one comment to offer on what I have just heard," he remarked. "I am not acquainted with any account of the wars of Mahomet, so that I can form no opinions as to his military talents; but if you had only watched the Emperor's tactics during the campaign in France, you might well have taken him for a god; and if he was beaten on the field of Waterloo, it was because he was more than mortal, it was because the earth found his weight too heavy to bear, and sprang from under his feet! On every other subject I entirely agree with you, and *tonnerre de Dieu!* whoever hatched you did a good day's work."

"Come," exclaimed Benassis with a smile, "let us sit down to dinner."

The walls of the dining-room were paneled from floor to ceiling, and painted gray. The furniture consisted of a few straw-bottomed chairs, a sideboard, some cupboards, a stove, and the late owner's celebrated clock; there were white curtains in the window, and a white cloth on the table, about which there was no sign of luxury. The dinner service was of plain white earthenware; the soup, made after the traditions of the late curé, was the most concentrated kind of broth that was ever set to simmer by any mortal cook. The doctor and his guest had scarcely finished it when a man

rushed into the kitchen, and in spite of Jacquotte, suddenly invaded the dining-room.

"Well, what is it?" asked the doctor.

"It is this, sir. The mistress, our Mme. Vigneau, has turned as white as white can be, so that we are frightened about her."

"Oh, well, then," Benassis said cheerfully, "I must leave the table," and he rose to go.

In spite of the doctor's entreaties, Genestas flung down his table-napkin, and swore in soldierly fashion that he would not finish his dinner without his host. He returned indeed to the salon; and as he warmed himself by the fire, he thought over the troubles that no man may escape, the troubles that are found in every lot that it falls to man to endure here upon earth.

Benassis soon came back, and the two future friends sat down again.

"Taboureau has just come up to speak to you," said Jacquotte to her master, as she brought in the dishes that she had kept hot for them.

"Who can be ill at his place?" asked the doctor.

"No one is ill, sir. I think from what he said that it is some matter of his own that he wants to ask you about; he is coming back again."

"Very good. This Taboureau," Benassis went on, addressing Genestas, "is for me a whole philosophical treatise; take a good look at him when he comes, he is sure to amuse you. He was a laborer, a thrifty, hard-working man, eating little and getting through a great deal of work. As soon as the rogue came to have a few crowns of his own, his intelligence began to develop; he watched the progress which I had originated in this little district with an eye to his own profit. He has made quite a fortune in eight years' time, that is to say, a fortune for our part of the world. Very likely he may have a couple of score thousand francs by now. But if I were to give you a thousand guesses, you would never find out how he made the money. He is a usurer, and his scheme

of usury is so profoundly and so cleverly based upon the requirements of the whole canton, that I should merely waste my time if I were to take it upon myself to undeceive them as to the benefits which they reap, in their own opinion, from their dealings with Taboureau. When this devil of a fellow saw every one cultivating his own plot of ground, he hurried about buying grain so as to supply the poor with the requisite seed. Here, as everywhere else, the peasants and even some of the farmers had no ready money with which to pay for seed. To some, Master Taboureau would lend a sack of barley, for which he was to receive a sack of rye at harvest time, and to others a measure of wheat for a sack of flour. At the present day the man has extended this curious business of his all over the department; and unless something happens to prevent him, he will go on and very likely make a million. Well, my dear sir, Taboureau the laborer, an obliging, hard-working, good-natured fellow, used to lend a helping hand to any one who asked him; but as his gains have increased *Monsieur* Taboureau has become litigious, arrogant, and somewhat given to sharp practice. The more money he makes, the worse he grows. The moment that the peasant forsakes his life of toil pure and simple for the leisured existence of the landowning classes, he becomes intolerable. There is a certain kind of character, partly virtuous, partly vicious, half-educated, half-ignorant, which will always be the despair of governments. You will see an example of it in Taboureau. He looks simple, and even doltish; but when his interests are in question, he is certainly profoundly clever."

A heavy footstep announced the approach of the grain lender.

"Come in, Taboureau!" cried Benassis.

Thus forewarned by the doctor, the commandant scrutinized the peasant in the doorway. Taboureau was decidedly thin, and stooped a little. He had a bulging forehead, covered with wrinkles, and a cavernous face, in which two small gray eyes with a dark spot in either of them seemed to be

pierced rather than set. The lines of the miser's mouth were close and firm, and his narrow chin turned up to meet an exaggeratedly hooked nose. His hair was turning gray already, and deep furrows which converged above the prominent cheek-bones spoke of the wily shrewdness of a horse-dealer and of a life spent in journeying about. He wore a blue coat in fairly clean condition, the square side-pocket flaps stuck out above his hips, and the skirts of the coats hung loose in front, so that a white-flowered waistcoat was visible. There he stood firmly planted on both feet, leaning upon a thick stick with a knob at the end of it. A little spaniel had followed the grain-dealer, in spite of Jacquotte's efforts, and was crouching beside him.

"Well, what is it?" Benassis asked as he turned to this being.

Tabourcau gave a suspicious glance at the stranger seated at the doctor's table, and said:

"It is not a case of illness, *M. le Maire,* but you understand how to doctor the ailments of the purse just as well as those of the body. We have had a little difficulty with a man over at Saint-Laurent, and I have come to ask your advice about it."

"Why not see the justice of the peace or his clerk?"

"Oh, because you are so much cleverer, sir, and I shall feel more sure about my case if I can have your countenance."

"My good Taboureau, I am willing to give medical advice to the poor without charging for it; but I cannot look into the lawsuits of a man who is as wealthy as you are for nothing. It costs a good deal to acquire that kind of knowledge."

Taboureau began to twist his hat about.

"If you want my advice, in order to save the hard coin you would have to pay to the lawyer folk over in Grenoble, you must send a bag of rye to the widow Martin, the woman who is bringing up the charity children."

"*Dame!* I will do it with all my heart, sir, if you think it necessary. Can I talk about this business of mine without

troubling the gentleman there?" he added, with a look at Genestas.

The doctor nodded, so Taboureau went on.

"Well, then, sir, two months ago a man from Saint-Laurent came over here to find me. 'Taboureau,' said he to me, 'could you sell me a hundred and thirty-seven measures of barley?' 'Why not?' say I, 'that is my trade. Do you want it immediately?' 'No,' he says, 'I want it for the beginning of spring, in March.' So far, so good. Well, we drive our bargain, and we drink a glass, and we agree that he is to pay me the price that barley fetched at Grenoble last market day, and I am to deliver it in March. I am to warehouse it at owner's risk, and no allowance for shrinkage of course. But barley goes up and up, my dear sir; the barley rises like boiling milk. Then I am hard up for money, and I sell my barley. Quite natural, sir, was it not?"

"No," said Benassis, "the barley had passed out of your possession, you were only warehousing it. And suppose the barley had gone down in value, would you not have compelled your buyer to take it at the price you agreed upon?"

"But very likely he would not have paid me, sir. One must look out for oneself! The seller ought to make a profit when the chance comes in his way; and, after all, the goods are not yours until you have paid for them. That is so, *Monsieur l'Officier,* is it not? For you can see that the gentleman has been in the army."

"Taboureau," Benassis said sternly, "ill luck will come to you. Sooner or later God punishes ill deeds. How can you, knowing as much as you do, a capable man moreover, and a man who conducts his business honorably, set examples of dishonesty to the canton? If you allow such proceedings as this to be taken against you, how can you expect that the poor will remain honest people and will not rob you? Your laborers will cheat you out of part of their working hours, and every one here will be demoralized. You are in the wrong. Your barley was as good as delivered. If the man from Saint-Laurent had fetched it himself, you would not

have gone there to take it away from him; you have sold something that was no longer yours to sell, for your barley had already been turned into money which was to be paid down at the stipulated time. But go on."

Genestas gave the doctor a significant glance, to call his attention to Taboureau's impassive countenance. Not a muscle had stirred in the usurer's face during this reprimand; there was no flush on his forehead, and no sign of emotion in his little eyes.

"Well, sir, I am called upon to supply the barley at last winter's price. Now *I* consider that I am not bound to do so."

"Look here, Taboureau, deliver that barley and be very quick about it, or make up your mind to be respected by nobody in future. Even if you gained the day in a case like this, you would be looked upon as an unscrupulous man who does not keep to his word, and is not bound by promises, or by honor, or——"

"Go on, there is nothing to be afraid of; tell me that I am a scamp, a scoundrel, a thief outright. You can say things like that in business without insulting anybody, M. le Maire. 'Tis each for himself in business, you know."

"Well, then, why deliberately put yourself in a position in which you deserve to be called by such names?"

"But if the law is on my side, sir?"

"But the law will certainly *not* be on your side."

"Are you quite sure about it, sir? Certain sure? For you see it is an important matter."

"Certainly I am. Quite sure. If I were not at dinner, I would have down the code, and you should see for yourself. If the case comes on, you will lose it, and you will never set foot in my house again, for I do not wish to receive people whom I do not respect. Do you understand? You will lose your case."

"Oh! no, not at all, I shall not lose it, sir," said Taboureau. "You see, sir, it is this way; it is the man from Saint-Laurent who owes *me* the barley; I bought it of him, and now he

refuses to deliver it. I just wanted to make quite certain that I should gain my case before going to any expense at the court about it."

Genestas and the doctor exchanged glances; each concealed his amazement at the ingenious device by which the man had sought to learn the truth about this point of law.

"Very well, Taboureau, your man is a swindler; you should not make bargains with such people."

"Ah! sir, they understand business, those people do."

"Good-bye, Taboureau."

"Your servant, gentlemen."

"Well, now," remarked Benassis, when the usurer had gone, "if that fellow were in Paris, do you not think that he would be a millionaire before very long?"

After dinner, the doctor and his visitor went back to the salon, and all the rest of the evening until bedtime they talked about war and politics; Genestas evincing a most violent dislike of the English in the course of conversation.

"May I know whom I have the honor of entertaining as a guest?" asked the doctor.

"My name is Pierre Bluteau," answered Genestas; "I am a captain stationed at Grenoble."

"Very well, sir. Do you care to adopt M. Gravier's plan? In the morning after breakfast he liked to go on my rounds with me. I am not at all sure that you will find anything to interest you in the things that occupy me—they are so very commonplace. For, after all, you own no land about here, nor are you the mayor of the place, and you will see nothing in the canton that you cannot see elsewhere; one thatched cottage is just like another. Still you will be in the open air, and you will have something to take you out of doors."

"No proposal could give me more pleasure. I did not venture to make it myself, lest I should thrust myself upon you."

Commandant Genestas (who shall keep his own name in spite of the fictitious appellation which he had thought fit to

give himself) followed his host to a room on the first floor above the salon.

"That is right," said Benassis, "Jacquotte has lighted a fire for you. If you want anything, there is a bell-pull close to the head of the bed."

"I am not likely to want anything, however small, it seems to me," exclaimed Genestas. "There is even a boot-jack. Only an old trooper knows what a boot-jack is worth! There are times, when one is out on a campaign, sir, when one is ready to burn down a house to come by a knave of a boot-jack. After a few marches, one on the top of another, or above all, after an engagement, there are times when a swollen foot and the soaked leather will not part company, pull as you will; I have had to lie down in my boots more than once. One can put up with the annoyance so long as one is by oneself."

The commandant's wink gave a kind of profound slyness to his last utterance; then he began to make a survey. Not without surprise, he saw that the room was neatly kept, comfortable, and almost luxurious.

"What splendor!" was his comment. "Your own room must be something wonderful."

"Come and see," said the doctor; "I am your neighbor, there is nothing but the staircase between us."

Genestas was again surprised when he entered the doctor's room, a bare-looking apartment with no adornment on the walls save an old-fashioned wall-paper of a yellowish tint with a pattern of brown roses over it; the color had gone in patches here and there. There was a roughly painted iron bedstead, two gray cotton curtains were suspended from a wooden bracket above it, and a threadbare strip of carpet lay at the foot; it was like a bed in a hospital. By the bed-head stood a rickety cupboard on four feet with a door that continually rattled with a sound like castanets. Three chairs and a couple of straw-bottomed armchairs stood about the room, and on a low chest of drawers in walnut wood stood a basin, and a ewer of obsolete pattern with a lid, which was

kept in place by a leaden rim round the top of the vessel. This completed the list of the furniture.

The grate was empty. All the apparatus required for shaving lay about in front of an old mirror suspended above the painted stone chimney-piece by a bit of string. The floor was clean and carefully swept, but it was worn and splintered in various places, and there were hollows in it here and there. Gray cotton curtains bordered with a green fringe adorned the two windows. The scrupulous cleanliness maintained by Jacquotte gave a certain air of distinction to this picture of simplicity, but everything in it, down to the round table littered with stray papers, and the very pens on the writing-desk, gave the idea of an almost monastic life—a life so wholly filled with thought and feeling of a wider kind that outward surroundings had come to be matters of no moment. An open door allowed the commandant to see a smaller room, which doubtless the doctor seldom occupied. It was scarcely kept in the same condition as the adjoining apartment; a few dusty books lay strewn about over the no less dusty shelves, and from the rows of labeled bottles it was easy to guess that the place was devoted rather to the dispensing of drugs than to scientific studies.

"Why this difference between your room and mine, you will ask?" said Benassis. "Listen a moment. I have always blushed for those who put their guests in the attics, who furnish them with mirrors that distort everything to such a degree that any one beholding himself might think that he was smaller or larger than nature made him, or suffering from an apoplectic stroke or some other bad complaint. Ought we not to do our utmost to make a room as pleasant as possible during the time that our friend can be with us? Hospitality, to my thinking, is a virtue, a pleasure, and a luxury; but in whatever light it is considered, nay, even if you regard it as a speculation, ought not our guest or our friend to be made much of? Ought not every refinement of luxury to be reserved for him?

"So the best furniture is put into your room, where a thick

carpet is laid down; there are hangings on the walls, and a clock and wax candles; and for you Jacquotte will do her best, she has no doubt brought a night-light, and a pair of new slippers and some milk, and her warming-pan too for your benefit. I hope that you will find that luxurious armchair the most comfortable seat you have ever sat in, it was a discovery of the late curé's; I do not know where he found it, but it is a fact that if you wish to meet with the perfection of comfort, beauty, or convenience, you must ask counsel of the Church. Well, I hope that you will find everything in your room to your liking. You will find some good razors and excellent soap, and all the trifling details that make one's own home so pleasant. And if my views on the subject of hospitality should not at once explain the difference between your room and mine, to-morrow, M. Bluteau, you will arrive at a wonderfully clear comprehension of the bareness of my room and the untidy condition of my study, when you see all the continual comings and goings here. Mine is not an indoor life, to begin with. I am almost always out of the house, and if I stay at home, peasants come in at every moment to speak to me. My body and soul and house are all theirs. Why should I worry about social conventions in these matters, or trouble myself over the damage unintentionally done to floors and furniture by these worthy folk? Such things cannot be helped. Luxury properly belongs to the boudoir and the guest-chamber, to great houses and châteaux. In short, as I scarcely do more than sleep here, what do I want with the superfluities of wealth? You do not know, moreover, how little I care for anything in this world."

They wished each other a friendly good-night with a warm shake of the hand, and went to bed. But before the commandant slept, he came to more than one conclusion as to the man who hour by hour grew greater in his eyes.

II.

A DOCTOR'S ROUND

THE first thing next morning Genestas went to the stable, drawn thither by the affection that every man feels for the horse that he rides. Nicolle's method of rubbing down the animal was quite satisfactory.

"Up already, Commandant Bluteau?" cried Benassis, as he came upon his guest. "You hear the drum beat in the morning wherever you go, even in the country! You are a regular soldier!"

"Are you all right?" replied Genestas, holding out his hand with a friendly gesture.

"I am never really all right," answered Benassis, half merrily, half sadly.

"Did you sleep well, sir?" inquired Jacquotte.

"Faith, yes, my beauty; the bed as you made it was fit for a queen."

Jacquotte's face beamed as she followed her master and his guest, and when she had seen them seat themselves at table, she remarked to Nicolle:

"He is not a bad sort, after all, that officer gentleman."

"I am sure he is not, he has given me two francs already."

"We will begin to-day by calling at two places where there have been deaths," Benassis said to his visitor as they left the dining-room. "Although doctors seldom deign to confront their supposed victims, I will take you round to the two houses, where you will be able to make some interesting observations of human nature; and the scenes to which you will be a witness will show you that in the expression of their feelings our folk among the hills differ greatly from the

dwellers in the lowlands. Up among the mountain peaks in our canton they cling to customs that bear the impress of an older time, and that vaguely recall scenes in the Bible. Nature has traced out a line over our mountain ranges; the whole appearance of the country is different on either side of it. You find strength of character up above, flexibility and quickness of perception below; they have larger ways of regarding things among the hills, while the bent of the lowlands is always towards the material interests of existence. I have never seen a difference so strongly marked, unless it has been in the Val d'Ajou, where the northern side is peopled by a tribe of idiots, and the southern by an intelligent race. There is nothing but a stream in the valley bottom to separate these two populations, which are utterly dissimilar in every respect, as different in face and stature as in manners, customs, and occupation. A fact of this kind should compel those who govern a country to make very extensive studies of local differences before passing laws that are to affect the great mass of the people. But the horses are ready, let us start!"

In a short time the two horsemen reached a house in a part of the township that was overlooked by the mountains of the Grande Chartreuse. Before the door of the dwelling, which was fairly clean and tidy, they saw a coffin, set upon two chairs, and covered with a black pall. Four tall candles stood about it, and on a stool near by there was a shallow brass dish full of holy water, in which a branch of green boxwood was steeping. Every passer-by went into the yard, knelt by the side of the dead, said a *Pater noster,* and sprinkled a few drops of holy water on the bier. Above the black cloth that covered the coffin rose the green sprays of a jessamine that grew beside the doorway, and a twisted vine shoot, already in leaf, overran the lintel. Even the saddest ceremonies demand that things shall appear to the best advantage, and in obedience to this vaguely-felt requirement a young girl had been sweeping the front of the house. The dead man's eldest son, a young peasant about twenty-two years of age,

stood motionless, leaning against the door-post. The tears in his eyes came and went without falling, or perhaps he furtively brushed them away. Benassis and Genestas saw all the details of this scene as they stood beyond the low wall; they fastened their horses to one of the row of poplar trees that grew along it, and entered the yard just as the widow came out of the byre. A woman carrying a jug of milk was with her, and spoke.

"Try to bear up bravely, my poor Pelletier," she said.

"Ah! my dear, after twenty-five years of life together, it is very hard to lose your man," and her eyes brimmed over with tears. "Will you pay the two *sous?*" she added, after a moment, as she held out her hand to her neighbor.

"There, now! I had forgotten about it," said the other woman, giving her the coin. "Come, neighbor, don't take on so. Ah! there is M. Benassis!"

"Well, poor mother, how are you going on? A little better?" asked the doctor.

"Dame!" she said, as the tears fell fast, "we must go on, all the same, that is certain. I tell myself that my man is out of pain now. He suffered so terribly! But come inside, sir. Jacques, set some chairs for these gentlemen. Come, stir yourself a bit. Lord bless you! if you were to stop there for a century, it would not bring your poor father back again. And now, you will have to do the work of two."

"No, no, good woman, leave your son alone, we will not sit down. You have a boy there who will take care of you, and who is quite fit to take his father's place."

"Go and change your clothes, Jacques," cried the widow; "you will be wanted directly."

"Well, good-bye, mother," said Benassis.

"Your servant, gentlemen."

"Here, you see, death is looked upon as an event for which every one is prepared," said the doctor; "it brings no interruption to the course of family life, and they will not even wear mourning of any kind. No one cares to be at the expense of it; they are all either too poor or too parsimonious

in the villages hereabouts, so that mourning is unknown in country districts. Yet the custom of wearing mourning is something better than a law or a usage, it is an institution somewhat akin to all moral obligations. But in spite of our endeavors, neither M. Janvier nor I have succeeded in making our peasants understand the great importance of public demonstrations of feeling for the maintenance of social order. These good folk, who have only just begun to think and act for themselves, are slow as yet to grasp the changed conditions which should attach them to these theories. They have only reached those ideas which conduce to economy and to physical welfare; in the future, if some one else carries on this work of mine, they will come to understand the principles that serve to uphold and preserve public order and justice. As a matter of fact, it is not sufficient to be an honest man, you must appear to be honest in the eyes of others. Society does not live by moral ideas alone; its existence depends upon actions in harmony with those ideas.

"In most country communes, out of a hundred families deprived by death of their head, there are only a few individuals capable of feeling more keenly than the others, who will remember the death for very long; in a year's time the rest will have forgotten all about it. Is not this forgetfulness a sore evil? A religion is the very heart of a nation; it expresses their feelings and their thoughts, and exalts them by giving them an object; but unless outward and visible honor is paid to a God, religion cannot exist; and, as a consequence, human ordinances lose all their force. If the conscience belongs to God and to Him only, the body is amenable to social law. Is it not, therefore, a first step towards atheism to efface every sign of pious sorrow in this way, to neglect to impress on children who are not yet old enough to reflect, and on all other people who stand in need of example, the necessity of obedience to human law, by openly manifested resignation to the will of Providence, who chastens and consoles, who bestows and takes away worldly wealth? I confess that, after passing through a period of sneering in-

credulity, I have come during my life here to recognize the value of the rites of religion and of religious observances in the family, and to discern the importance of household customs and domestic festivals. The family will always be the basis of human society. Law and authority are first felt there; there, at any rate, the habit of obedience should be learned. Viewed in the light of all their consequences, the spirit of the family and paternal authority are two elements but little developed as yet in our new legislative system. Yet in the family, the commune, the department, lies the whole of our country. The laws ought therefore to be based on these three great divisions.

"In my opinion, marriages, the birth of infants, and the deaths of heads of households, cannot be surrounded with too much circumstance. The secret of the strength of Catholicism, and of the deep root that it has taken in the ordinary life of man, lies precisely in this—that it steps in to invest every important event in his existence with a pomp that is so naïvely touching, and so grand, whenever the priest rises to the height of his mission and brings his office into harmony with the sublimity of Christian doctrine.

"Once I looked upon the Catholic religion as a cleverly exploited mass of prejudices and superstitions, which an intelligent civilization ought to deal with according to its desserts. Here I have discovered its political necessity and its usefulness as a moral agent; here, moreover, I have come to understand its power, through a knowledge of the actual thing which the word expresses. Religion means a bond or tie, and certainly a cult—or, in other words, the outward and visible form of religion is the only force that can bind the various elements of society together and mould them into a permanent form. Lastly, it was also here that I have felt the soothing influence that religion sheds over the wounds of humanity, and (without going further into the subject) I have seen how admirably it is suited to the fervid temperaments of southern races.

"Let us take the road up the hillside," said the doctor, in-

terrupting himself; "we must reach the plateau up there. Thence we shall look down upon both valleys, and you will see a magnificent view. The plateau lies three thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean; we shall see over Savoy and Dauphiné, and the mountain ranges of the Lyonnais and Rhone. We shall be in another commune, a hill commune, and on a farm belonging to M. Gravier you will see the kind of scene of which I have spoken. There the great events of life are invested with a solemnity which comes up to my ideas. Mourning for the dead is vigorously prescribed. Poor people will beg in order to purchase black clothing, and no one refuses to give in such a case. There are few days in which the widow does not mention her loss; she always speaks of it with tears, and her grief is as deep after ten days of sorrow as on the morning after her bereavement. Manners are patriarchal: the father's authority is unlimited, his word is law. He takes his meals sitting by himself at the head of the table; his wife and children wait upon him, and those about him never address him without using certain respectful forms of speech, while every one remains standing and uncovered in his presence. Men brought up in this atmosphere are conscious of their dignity; to my way of thinking, it is a noble education to be brought up among these customs. And, for the most part, they are upright, thrifty, and hard-working people in this commune. The father of every family, when he is old and past work, divides his property equally among his children, and they support him; that is the usual way here. An old man of ninety, in the last century, who had divided everything he had among his four children, went to live with each one in turn for three months in the year. As he left the oldest to go to the home of a younger brother, one of his friends asked him, 'Well, are you satisfied with the arrangement?' 'Faith! yes,' the old man answered; 'they have treated me as if I had been their own child.' That answer of his seemed so remarkable to an officer then stationed at Grenoble, that he repeated it in more than one Parisian salon. That officer was the celebrated moralist Vauvenargues,

and in this way the beautiful saying came to the knowledge of another writer named Chamfort. Ah! still more forcible phrases are often struck out among us, but they lack a historian worthy of them."

"I have come across Moravians and Lollards in Bohemia and Hungary," said Genestas. "They are a kind of people something like your mountaineers, good folk who endure the sufferings of war with angelic patience."

"Men living under simple and natural conditions are bound to be almost alike in all countries. Sincerity of life takes but one form. It is true that a country life often extinguishes thought of a wider kind; but evil propensities are weakened and good qualities are developed by it. In fact, the fewer the numbers of the human beings collected together in a place, the less crime, evil thinking, and general bad behavior will be found in it. A pure atmosphere counts for a good deal in purity of morals."

The two horsemen, who had been climbing the stony road at a foot pace, now reached the level space of which Benassis had spoken. It is a strip of land lying round about the base of a lofty mountain peak, a bare surface of rock with no growth of any kind upon it; deep clefts are riven in its sheer inaccessible sides. The gray crest of the summit towers above the ledge of fertile soil which lies around it, a domain sometimes narrower, sometimes wider, and altogether about a hundred acres in extent. Here, through a vast break in the line of the hills to the south, the eye sees French Maurienne, Dauphiné, the crags of Savoy, and the far-off mountains of the Lyonnais. Genestas was gazing from this point, over a land that lay far and wide in the spring sunlight, when there arose the sound of a wailing cry.

"Let us go on," said Benassis; "the wail for the dead has begun, that is the name they give to this part of the funeral rites."

On the western slope of the mountain peak, the commandant saw the buildings belonging to a farm of some size. The whole place formed a perfect square. The gateway consisted

of a granite arch, impressive in its solidity, which added to the old-world appearance of the buildings with the ancient trees that stood about them, and the growth of plant life on the roofs. The house itself lay at the farther end of the yard. Barns, sheepfolds, stables, cowsheds, and other buildings lay on either side, and in the midst was the great pool where the manure had been laid to rot. On a thriving farm, such a yard as this is usually full of life and movement, but to-day it was silent and deserted. The poultry were shut up, the cattle were all in the byres, there was scarcely a sound of animal life. Both stables and cowsheds had been carefully locked, and a clean path to the house had been swept across the yard. The perfect neatness which reigned in a place where everything as a rule was in disorder, the absence of stirring life, the stillness in so noisy a spot, the calm serenity of the hills, the deep shadow cast by the towering peak—everything combined to make a strong impression on the mind.

Genestas was accustomed to painful scenes, yet he could not help shuddering as he saw a dozen men and women standing weeping outside the door of the great hall. *"The master is dead!"* they wailed; the unison of voices gave appalling effect to the words which they repeated twice during the time required to cross the space between the gateway and the farmhouse door. To this wailing lament succeeded moans from within the house; the sound of a woman's voice came through the casements.

"I dare not intrude upon such grief as this," said Genestas to Benassis.

"I always go to visit a bereaved family," the doctor answered, "either to certify the death, or to see that no mischance caused by grief has befallen the living. You need not hesitate to come with me. The scene is impressive, and there will be such a great many people that no one will notice your presence."

As Genestas followed the doctor, he found, in fact, that the first room was full of relations of the dead. They passed

through the crowd and stationed themselves at the door of a bedroom that opened out of the great hall which served the whole family for a kitchen and a sitting-room; the whole colony, it should rather be called, for the great length of the table showed that some forty people lived in the house. Benassis' arrival interrupted the discourse of a tall, simply-dressed woman, with thin locks of hair, who held the dead man's hand in hers in a way that spoke eloquently.

The dead master of the house had been arrayed in his best clothes, and now lay stretched out cold and stiff upon the bed. They had drawn the curtains aside; the thought of heaven seemed to brood over the quiet face and the white hair—it was like the closing scene of a drama. On either side of the bed stood the children and the nearest relations of the husband and wife. These last stood in a line on either side; the wife's kin upon the left, and those of her husband on the right. Both men and women were kneeling in prayer, and almost all of them were in tears. Tall candles stood about the bed. The curé of the parish and his assistants had taken their places in the middle of the room, beside the bier. There was something tragical about the scene, with the head of the family lying before the coffin, which was waiting to be closed down upon him for ever.

"Ah!" cried the widow, turning as she saw Benassis, "if the skill of the best of men could not save you, my dear lord, it was because it was ordained in heaven that you should precede me to the tomb! Yes, this hand of yours, that used to press mine so kindly, is cold! I have lost my dear helpmate for ever, and our household has lost its beloved head, for truly you were the guide of us all! Alas! there is not one of those who is weeping with me who has not known all the worth of your nature, and felt the light of your soul, but I alone knew all the patience and the kindness of your heart. Oh! my husband, my husband! must I bid you farewell for ever? Farewell to you, our stay and support! Farewell to you, my dear master! And we, your children, for to each of us you gave the same fatherly love, all we, your children, have lost our father!"

The widow flung herself upon the dead body and clasped it in a tight embrace, as if her kisses and the tears with which she covered it could give it warmth again; during the pause, came the wail of the servants:

"The master is dead!"

"Yes," the widow went on, "he is dead! Our beloved who gave us our bread, who sowed and reaped for us, who watched over our happiness, who guided us through life, who ruled so kindly among us. *Now,* I may speak in his praise, and say that he never caused me the slightest sorrow; he was good and strong and patient. Even while we were torturing him for the sake of his health, so precious to us, 'Let it be, children, it is all no use,' the dear lamb said, just in the same tone of voice with which he had said, 'Everything is all right, friends,' only a few days before. Ah! *grand Dieu!* a few days ago! A few days have been enough to take away the gladness from our house and to darken our lives, to close the eyes of the best, most upright, most revered of men. No one could plow as he could. Night or day he would go about over the mountains, he feared nothing, and when he came back he had always a smile for his wife and children. Ah! he was our best beloved! It was dull here by the fireside when *he* was away, and our food lost all its relish. Oh! how will it be now, when our guardian angel will be laid away under the earth, and we shall never see him any more? Never any more, dear kinsfolk and friends; never any more, my children! Yes, my children have lost their kind father, our relations and friends have lost their good kinsman and their trusty friend, the household has lost its master, and I have lost everything!"

She took the hand of the dead again, and knelt, so that she might press her face close to his as she kissed it. The servants' cry, *"The master is dead!"* was again repeated three times.

Just then the eldest son came to his mother to say, "The people from Saint-Laurent have just come, mother; we want some wine for them."

"Take the keys," she said in a low tone, and in a different voice from that in which she had just expressed her grief; "you are the master of the house, my son; see that they receive the welcome that your father would have given them; do not let them find any change."

"Let me have one more long look," she went on. "But, alas! my good husband, you do not feel my presence now, I cannot bring back warmth to you! I only wish that I could comfort you still, could let you know that so long as I live you will dwell in the heart that you made glad, could tell you that I shall be happy in the memory of my happiness—that the dear thought of you will live on in this room. Yes, so long as God spares me, this room shall be filled with memories of you. Hear my vow, dear husband! Your couch shall always remain as it is now. I will sleep in it no more, since you are dead; henceforward, while I live, it shall be cold and empty. With you, I have lost all that makes a woman; her master, husband, father, friend, companion, and helpmate; I have lost all!"

"The master is dead!" the servants wailed. Others raised the cry, and the lament became general. The widow took a pair of scissors that hung at her waist, cut off her hair, and laid the locks in her husband's hand. Deep silence fell on them all.

"That act means that she will not marry again," said Benassis; "this determination was expected by many of the relatives."

"Take it, dear lord!" she said; her emotion brought a tremor to her voice that went to the hearts of all who heard her. "I have sworn to be faithful; I give this pledge to you to keep in the grave. We shall thus be united for ever, and through love of your children I will live on among the family in whom you used to feel yourself young again. Oh! that you could hear me, my husband! the pride and joy of my heart! Oh! that you could know that all my power to live, now you are dead, will yet come from you; for I shall live to carry out your sacred wishes and to honor your memory."

Benassis pressed Genestas' hand as an invitation to follow him, and they went out. By this time the first room was full of people who had come from another mountain commune; all of them waited in meditative silence, as if the sorrow and grief that brooded over the house had already taken possession of them. As Benassis and the commandant crossed the threshold, they overheard a few words that passed between one of the newcomers and the eldest son of the late owner.

"Then when did he die?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the eldest son, a man of five-and-twenty years of age, "I did not see him die. He asked for me, and I was not there!" His voice was broken with sobs, but he went on: "He said to me the night before, 'You must go over to the town, my boy, and pay our taxes; my funeral will put that out of your minds, and we shall be behindhand, a thing that has never happened before.' It seemed the best thing to do, so I went; and while I was gone, he died, and I never received his last embrace. I have always been at his side, but he did not see me near him at the last in my place where I had always been."

"The master is dead!"

"Alas! he is dead, and I was not there to receive his last words and his latest sigh. And what did the taxes matter? Would it not have been better to lose all our money than to leave home just then? Could all that we have make up to me for the loss of his last farewell. No. *Mon Dieu!* If *your* father falls ill, Jean, do not go away and leave him, or you will lay up a lifelong regret for yourself."

"My friend," said Genestas, "I have seen thousands of men die on the battlefield; death did not wait to let their children bid them farewell; take comfort, you are not the only one."

"But a father who was such a good man!" he replied, bursting into fresh tears.

Benassis took Genestas in the direction of the farm buildings.

"The funeral oration will only cease when the body has

been laid in its coffin," said the doctor, "and the weeping woman's language will grow more vivid and impassioned all the while. But a woman only acquires the right to speak in such a strain before so imposing an audience by a blameless life. If the widow could reproach herself with the smallest of shortcomings, she would not dare to utter a word; for if she did, she would pronounce her own condemnation, she would be at the same time her own accuser and judge. Is there not something sublime in this custom which thus judges the living and the dead? They only begin to wear mourning after a week has elapsed, when it is publicly worn at a meeting of all the family. Their near relations spend the week with the widow and children, to help them to set their affairs in order and to console them. A family gathering at such a time produces a great effect on the minds of the mourners; the consideration for others which possesses men when they are brought into close contact acts as a restraint on violent grief. On the last day, when the mourning garb has been assumed, a solemn banquet is given, and their relations take leave of them. All this is taken very seriously. Any one who was slack in fulfilling his duties after the death of the head of a family would have no one at his own funeral."

The doctor had reached the cowhouse as he spoke; he opened the door and made the commandant enter, that he might show it to him.

"All our cowhouses have been rebuilt after this pattern, captain. Look! Is it not magnificent?"

Genestas could not help admiring the huge place. The cows and oxen stood in two rows, with their tails towards the side walls, and their heads in the middle of the shed. Access to the stalls was afforded by a fairly wide space between them and the wall; you could see their horned heads and shining eyes through the lattice work, so that it was easy for the master to run his eyes over the cattle. The fodder was placed on some staging erected above the stalls, so that it fell into the racks below without waste of labor or material. There was a wide-paved space down the centre, which was kept clean, and ventilated by a thorough draught of air.

"In the winter time," Benassis said, as he walked with Genestas down the middle of the cowhouse, "both men and women do their work here together in the evenings. The tables are set out here, and in this way the people keep themselves warm without going to any expense. The sheep are housed in the same way. You would not believe how quickly the beasts fall into orderly ways. I have often wondered to see them come in; each knows her proper place, and allows those who take precedence to pass in before her. Look! there is just room enough in each stall to do the milking and to rub the cattle down; and the floor slopes a little to facilitate drainage."

"One can judge of everything else from the sight of this cowhouse," said Genestas; "without flattery, these are great results indeed!"

"We have had some trouble to bring them about," Benassis answered; "but then, see what fine cattle they are!"

"They are splendid beasts certainly; you had good reason to praise them to me," answered Genestas.

"Now," said the doctor, when he had mounted his horse and passed under the gateway, "we are going over some of the newly cleared waste, and through the corn land. I have christened this little corner of our Commune 'La Beauce.' "

For about an hour they rode at a foot pace across fields in a state of high cultivation, on which the soldier complimented the doctor; then they came down the mountain side into the township again, talking whenever the pace of their horses allowed them to do so. At last they reached a narrow glen, down which they rode into the main valley.

"I promised yesterday," Benassis said to Genestas, "to show you one of the two soldiers who left the army and came back to us after the fall of Napoleon. We shall find him somewhere hereabouts, if I am not mistaken. The mountain streams flow into a sort of natural reservoir or tarn up here; the earth they bring down has silted it up, and he is engaged in clearing it out. But if you are to take any interest in the man, I must tell you his history. His name is Gondrin. He

was only eighteen years old when he was drawn in the great conscription of 1792, and drafted into a corps of gunners. He served as a private soldier in Napoleon's campaigns in Italy, followed him to Egypt, and came back from the East after the Peace of Amiens. In the time of the Empire he was incorporated in the Pontoon Troop of the Guard, and was constantly on active service in Germany, lastly the poor fellow made the Russian campaign."

"We are brothers-in-arms then, to some extent," said Genestas; "I have made the same campaigns. Only an iron frame could stand the tricks played by so many different climates. My word for it, those who are still standing on their stumps after marching over Italy, Egypt, Germany, Portugal, and Russia must have applied to Providence and taken out a patent for living."

"Just so, you will see a solid fragment of a man," answered Benassis. "You know all about the Retreat from Moscow; it is useless to tell you about it. This man I have told you of is one of the pontooners of the Beresina; he helped to construct the bridge by which the army made the passage, and stood waist-deep in water to drive in the first piles. General Eblé, who was in command of the pontooners, could only find forty-two men who were plucky enough, in Gondrin's phrase, to tackle that business. The general himself came down to the stream to hearten and cheer the men, promising each of them a pension of a thousand francs and the Cross of the Legion of Honor. The first who went down into the Beresina had his leg taken off by a block of ice, and the man himself was washed away; but you will better understand the difficulty of the task when you hear the end of the story. Of the forty-two volunteers, Gondrin is the only one alive to-day. Thirty-nine of them lost their lives in the Beresina, and the two others died miserably in a Polish hospital.

"The poor fellow himself only returned from Wilna in 1814, to find the Bourbons restored to power. General Eblé (of whom Gondrin cannot speak without tears in his eyes)

was dead. The pontooner was deaf, and his health was shattered; and as he could neither read nor write, he found no one left to help him or to plead his cause. He begged his way to Paris, and while there made application at the War Office, not for the thousand francs of extra pension which had been promised to him, nor yet for the Cross of the Legion of Honor, but only for the bare pension due to him after twenty-two years of service, and I do not know how many campaigns. He did not obtain his pension or his traveling expenses; he did not even receive his arrears of pay. He spent a year in making fruitless solicitations, holding out his hands in vain to those whom he had saved; and at the end of it he came back here, sorely disheartened but resigned to his fate. This hero unknown to fame does draining work on the land, for which he is paid ten *sous* the fathom. He is accustomed to working in a marshy soil, and so, as he says, he gets jobs which no one else cares to take. He can make about three francs a day by clearing out ponds, or draining meadows that lie under water. His deafness makes him seem surly, and he is not naturally inclined to say very much, but there is a good deal in him.

"We are very good friends. He dines with me on the day of Austerlitz, on the Emperor's birthday, and on the anniversary of the disaster at Waterloo, and during the dessert he always receives a napoleon to pay for his wine every quarter. Every one in the Commune shares in my feeling of respect for him; if he would allow them to support him, nothing would please them better. At every house to which he goes the people follow my example, and show their esteem by asking him to dine with them. It is a feeling of pride that leads him to work, and it is only as a portrait of the Emperor that he can be induced to take my twenty-franc piece. He has been deeply wounded by the injustice that has been done him; but I think regret for the Cross is greater than the desire for his pension.

"He has one great consolation. After the bridges had been constructed across the Beresina, General Eblé presented such

of the pontooners as were not disabled to the Emperor, and Napoleon embraced poor Gondrin—perhaps but for that accolade he would have died ere now. This memory and the hope that some day Napoleon will return are all that Gondrin lives by. Nothing will ever persuade him that Napoleon is dead, and so convinced is he that the Emperor's captivity is wholly and solely due to the English, that I believe he would be ready on the slightest pretext to take the life of the best-natured alderman that ever traveled for pleasure in foreign parts."

"Let us go on as fast as possible!" cried Genestas. He had listened to the doctor's story with rapt attention, and now seemed to recover consciousness of his surroundings. "Let us hurry! I long to see that man!"

Both of them put their horses to a gallop.

"The other soldier that I spoke of," Benassis went on, "is another of those men of iron who have knocked about everywhere with our armies. His life, like that of all French soldiers, has been made up of bullets, sabre strokes, and victories; he has had a very rough time of it, and has only worn the woolen epaulettes. He has a fanatical affection for Napoleon, who conferred the Cross upon him on the field of Valontina. He is of a jovial turn of mind, and like a genuine Dauphinois, has always looked after his own interests, has his pension, and the honors of the Legion. Goguelat is his name. He was an infantry man, who exchanged into the Guard in 1812. He is Gondrin's better half, so to speak, for the two have taken up house together. They both lodge with a peddler's widow, and make over their money to her. She is a kind soul, who boards them and looks after them and their clothes as if they were her children.

"In his quality of local postman, Goguelat carries all the news of the countryside, and a good deal of practice acquired in this way has made him an orator in great request at upsittings, and the champion teller of stories in the district. Gondrin looks upon him as a very knowing fellow, and something of a wit; and whenever Goguelat talks about Napoleon,

his comrade seems to understand what he is saying from the movement of his lips. There will be an up-sitting (as they call it) in one of my barns to-night. If these two come over to it, and we can manage to see without being seen, I shall treat you to a view of the spectacle. But here we are, close to the ditch, and I do not see my friend the pontooner."

The doctor and the commandant looked everywhere about them; Gondrin's soldier's coat lay there beside a heap of black mud, and his wheelbarrow, spade, and pickaxe were visible, but there was no sign of the man himself along the various pebbly watercourses, for the wayward mountain streams had hollowed out channels that were almost overgrown with low bushes.

"He cannot be so very far away. Gondrin! Where are you?" shouted Benassis.

Genestas first saw the curling smoke from a tobacco pipe rise among the brushwood on a bank of rubbish not far away. He pointed it out to the doctor, who shouted again. The old pontooner raised his head at this, recognized the mayor, and came towards them down a little pathway.

"Well, old friend," said Benassis, making a sort of speaking-trumpet with his hand. "Here is a comrade of yours, who was out in Egypt, come to see you."

Gondrin raised his face at once and gave Genestas a swift, keen, and searching look, one of those glances by which old soldiers are wont at once to take the measure of any impending danger. He saw the red ribbon that the commandant wore, and made a silent and respectful military salute.

"If the Little Corporal were alive," the officer cried, "you would have the Cross of the Legion of Honor and a handsome pension besides, for every man who wore epaulettes on the other side of the river owed his life to you on the 1st of October 1812. But I am not the Minister of War, my friend," the commandant added as he dismounted, and with a sudden rush of feeling he grasped the laborer's hand.

The old pontooner drew himself up at the words, he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and put it in his pocket.

"I only did my duty, sir," he said, with his head bent down; "but others have not done their duty by me. They asked for my papers! Why, the Twenty-ninth Bulletin, I told them, must do instead of my papers!"

"But you must make another application, comrade. You are bound to have justice done you in these days, if influence is brought to bear in the right quarter."

"Justice!" cried the veteran. The doctor and the commandant shuddered at the tone in which he spoke.

In the brief pause that followed, both the horsemen looked at the man before them, who seemed like a fragment of the wreck of great armies which Napoleon had filled with men of bronze sought out from among three generations. Gondrin was certainly a splendid specimen of that seemingly indestructible mass of men which might be cut to pieces but never gave way. The old man was scarcely five feet high, wide across the shoulders, and broad-chested; his face was sunburned, furrowed with deep wrinkles, but the outlines were still firm in spite of the hollows in it, and one could see even now that it was the face of a soldier. It was a rough-hewn countenance, his forehead seemed like a block of granite; but there was a weary expression about his face, and the gray hairs hung scantily about his head, as if life were waning there already. Everything about him indicated unusual strength; his arms were covered thickly with hair, and so was the chest, which was visible through the opening of his coarse shirt. In spite of his almost crooked legs, he held himself firm and erect, as if nothing could shake him.

"Justice," he said once more; "there never will be justice for the like of us. We cannot send bailiffs to the Government to demand our dues for us; and as the wallet must be filled somehow," he said, striking his stomach, "we cannot afford to wait. Moreover, these gentry who lead snug lives in government offices may talk and talk, but their words are not good to eat, so I have come back again here to draw my pay out of the commonalty," he said, striking the mud with his spade.

"Things must not be left in that way, old comrade," said Genestas. "I owe my life to you, and it would be ungrateful of me if I did not lend you a hand. I have not forgotten the passage over the bridges in the Beresina, and it is fresh in the memories of some brave fellows of my acquaintance; they will back me up, and the nation shall give you the recognition you deserve."

"You will be called a Bonapartist! Please do not meddle in the matter, sir. I have gone to the rear now, and I have dropped into my hole here like a spent bullet. But after riding on camels through the desert, and drinking my glass by the fireside in Moscow, I never thought that I should come back to die here beneath the trees that my father planted," and he began to work again.

"Poor old man!" said Genestas, as they turned to go. "I should do the same if I were in his place; we have lost our father. Everything seems dark to me now that I have seen that man's hopelessness," he went on, addressing Benassis; "he does not know how much I am interested in him, and he will think that I am one of those gilded rascals who cannot feel for a soldier's sufferings."

He turned quickly and went back, grasped the veteran's hand, and spoke loudly in his ear:

"I swear by the Cross I wear—the Cross of Honor it used to be—that I will do all that man can do to obtain your pension for you; even if I have to swallow a dozen refusals from the minister, and to petition the king and the dauphin and the whole shop!"

Old Gondrin quivered as he heard the words. He looked hard at Genestas and said, "Haven't you served in the ranks?" The commandant nodded. The pontooner wiped his hand and took that of Genestas, which he grasped warmly and said:

"I made the army a present of my life, general, when I waded out into the river yonder, and if I am still alive, it is all so much to the good. One moment! Do you care to see to the bottom of it? Well, then, ever since *somebody* was

pulled down from his place, I have ceased to care about anything. And, after all," he went on more cheerfully, as he pointed to the land, "they have made over twenty thousand francs to me here, and I am taking it out in detail, as *he* used to say!"

"Well, then, comrade," said Genestas, touched by the grandeur of this forgiveness, "at least you shall have the only thing that you cannot prevent me from giving to you, here below." The commandant tapped his heart, looked once more at the old pontooner, mounted his horse again, and went his way side by side with Benassis.

"Such cruelty as this on the part of a government foments the strife between rich and poor," said the doctor. "People who exercise a little brief authority have never given a serious thought to the consequences that must follow an act of injustice done to a man of the people. It is true that a poor man who needs must work for his daily bread cannot long keep up the struggle; but he can talk, and his words find an echo in every sufferer's heart, so that one bad case of this kind is multiplied, for every one who hears of it feels it as a personal wrong, and the leaven works. Even this is not so serious, but something far worse comes of it. Among the people, these cases of injustice bring about a chronic state of smothered hatred for their social superiors. The middle class becomes the poor man's enemy; they lie without the bounds of his moral code, he tells lies to them and robs them without scruple; indeed, theft ceases to be a crime or a misdemeanor, and is looked upon as an act of vengeance.

"When an official, who ought to see that the poor have justice done them, uses them ill and cheats them of their due, how can we expect the poor starving wretches to bear their troubles meekly and to respect the rights of property? It makes me shudder to think that some understrapper whose business it is to dust papers in a government office, has pocketed Gondrin's promised thousand francs of pension. And yet there are folk who, never having measured the excess of the people's sufferings, accuse the people of excess in the day



An old laborer making his way along the road in company with an aged woman



of their vengeance! When a government has done more harm than good to individuals, its further existence depends on the merest accident, the masses square the account after their fashion by upsetting it. A statesman ought always to imagine Justice with the poor at her feet, for justice was only invented for the poor."

When they had come within the compass of the township, Benassis saw two people walking along the road in front of them, and turned to his companion, who had been absorbed for some time in thought.

"You have seen a veteran soldier resigned to his life of wretchedness, and now you are about to see an old agricultural laborer who is submitting to the same lot. The man there ahead of us has dug and sown and toiled for others all his life."

Genestas looked and saw an old laborer making his way along the road, in company with an aged woman. He seemed to be afflicted with some form of sciatica, and limped painfully along. His feet were encased in a wretched pair of sabots, and a sort of wallet hung over his shoulder. Several tools lay in the bottom of the bag; their handles, blackened with long use and the sweat of toil, rattled audibly together; while the other end of the wallet behind his shoulder held bread, some walnuts, and a few fresh onions. His legs seemed to be warped, as it were, his back was bent by continual toil; he stooped so much as he walked that he leaned on a long stick to steady himself. His snow-white hair escaped from under a battered hat, grown rusty by exposure to all sorts of weather, and mended here and there with visible stitches of white thread. His clothes, made of a kind of rough canvas, were a mass of patches of contrasting colors. This piece of humanity in ruins lacked none of the characteristics that appeal to our hearts when we see ruins of other kinds.

His wife held herself somewhat more erect. Her clothing was likewise a mass of rags, and the cap that she wore was of the coarsest materials. On her back she carried a rough earthen jar by means of a thong passed through the handles

of the great pitcher, which was round in shape and flattened at the sides. They both looked up when they heard the horses approaching, saw that it was Benassis, and stopped.

The man had worked till he was almost past work, and his faithful helpmate was no less broken with toil. It was painful to see how the summer sun and the winter's cold had blackened their faces, and covered them with such deep wrinkles that their features were hardly discernible. It was not their life history that had been engraven on their faces; but it might be gathered from their attitude and bearing. Incessant toil had been the lot of both; they had worked and suffered together; they had had many troubles and few joys to share; and now, like captives grown accustomed to their prison, they seemed to be too familiar with wretchedness to heed it, and to take everything as it came. Yet a certain frank light-heartedness was not lacking in their faces; and on a closer view, their monotonous life, the lot of so many a poor creature, well-nigh seemed an enviable one. Trouble had set its unmistakable mark upon them, but petty cares had left no traces there.

"Well, my good Father Moreau, I suppose there is no help for it, and you must always be working?"

"Yes, M. Benassis, there are one or two more bits of waste that I mean to clear for you before I knock off work," the old man answered cheerfully, and a light shone in his little black eyes.

"Is that wine that your wife there is carrying? If you will not take a rest now, you ought at any rate to take wine."

"I take a rest? I should not know what to do with myself. The sun and the fresh air put life into me when I am out of doors and busy grubbing up the land. As to the wine, sir, yes, that is wine sure enough, and it is all through your contriving I know that the Mayor at Courteil lets us have it for next to nothing. Ah, you managed it very cleverly, but, all the same, I know you had a hand in it."

"Oh! come, come! Good-day, mother. You are going to work on that bit of land of Champferlu's to-day of course?"

"Yes, sir; I made a beginning there yesterday evening."

"Capital!" said Benassis. "It must be a satisfaction to you, at times, to see this hillside. You two have broken up almost the whole of the land on it yourselves."

"Lord! yes, sir," answered the old woman, "it has been our doing! We have fairly earned our bread."

"Work, you see, and land to cultivate are the poor man's consols. That good man would think himself disgraced if he went into the poorhouse or begged for his bread; he would choose to die pickaxe in hand, out in the open, in the sunlight. Faith, he bears a proud heart in him. He has worked until work has become his very life; and yet death has no terrors for him! He is a profound philosopher, little as he suspects it. Old Moreau's case suggested the idea to me of founding an almshouse for the country people of the district; a refuge for those who, after working hard all their lives, have reached an honorable old age of poverty.

"I had by no means expected to make the fortune which I have acquired here; indeed, I myself have no use for it, for a man who has fallen from the pinnacle of his hopes needs very little. It costs but little to live, the idler's life alone is a costly one, and I am not sure that the unproductive consumer is not robbing the community at large. There was some discussion about Napoleon's pension after his fall; it came to his ears, and he said that five francs a day and a horse to ride was all that he needed. I meant to have no more to do with money when I came here; but after a time I saw that money means power, and that it is in fact a necessity, if any good is to be done. So I have made arrangements in my will for turning my house into an almshouse, in which old people who have not Moreau's fierce independence can end their days. Part of the income of nine thousand francs brought in by the mill and the rest of my property will be devoted to giving outdoor relief in hard winters to those who really stand in need of it.

"This foundation will be under the control of the Municipal Council, with the addition of the curé, who is to be

president; and in this way the money made in the district will be returned to it. In my will I have laid down the lines on which this institution is to be conducted; it would be tedious to go over them, it is enough to say that I have thought it all out very carefully. I have also created a trust fund, which will some day enable the Commune to award several scholarships for children who show signs of promise in art or science. So, even after I am gone, my work of civilization will continue. When you have set yourself to do anything, Captain Bluteau, something within you urges you on, you see, and you cannot bear to leave it unfinished. This craving within us for order and for perfection is one of the signs that point most surely to a future existence. Now, let us quicken our pace, I have my round to finish, and there are five or six more patients still to be visited."

They cantered on for some time in silence, till Benassis said laughingly to his companion, "Come now, Captain Bluteau, you have drawn me out and made me chatter like a magpie, and you have not said a syllable about your own history, which must be an interesting one. When a soldier has come to your time of life, he has seen so much that he must have more than one adventure to tell about."

"Why, my history has been simply the history of the army," answered Genestas. "Soldiers are all after one pattern. Never in command, always giving and taking sabre-cuts in my place, I have lived just like anybody else. I have been wherever Napoleon led us, and have borne a part in every battle in which the Imperial Guard has struck a blow; but everybody knows all about these events. A soldier has to look after his horse, to endure hunger and thirst at times, to fight whenever there is fighting to be done, and there you have the whole history of his life. As simple as saying good-day, is it not? Then there are battles in which your horse casts a shoe at the outset, and lands you in a quandary; and as far as you are concerned, that is the whole of it. In short, I have seen so many countries, that seeing them has come to be a matter of course; and I have seen so many men die, that I have come to value my own life at nothing."

"But you yourself must have been in danger at times, and it would be interesting to hear you tell of your personal adventures."

"Perhaps," answered the commandant.

"Well, then, tell me about the adventure that made the deepest impression upon you. Come! do not hesitate. I shall not think that you are wanting in modesty even if you should tell me of some piece of heroism on your part; and when a man is quite sure that he will not be misunderstood, ought he not to find a kind of pleasure in saying, 'I did thus'?"

"Very well, then, I will tell you about something that gives me a pang of remorse from time to time. During fifteen years of warfare it never once happened that I killed a man, save in legitimate defence of self. We are drawn up in line, and we charge; and if we do not strike down those before us, they will begin to draw blood without asking leave, so you have to kill if you do not mean to be killed, and your conscience is quite easy. But once I broke a comrade's back; it happened in a singular way, and it has been a painful thing to me to think of afterwards—the man's dying grimace haunts me at times. But you shall judge for yourself.

"It was during the retreat from Moscow," the commandant went on. "The Grand Army had ceased to be itself; we were more like a herd of over-driven cattle. Good-bye to discipline! The regiments had lost sight of their colors, every one was his own master, and the Emperor (one need not scruple to say it) knew that it was useless to attempt to exert his authority when things had gone so far. When we reached Studzianka, a little place on the other side of the Beresina, we came upon human dwellings for the first time after several days. There were barns and peasants' cabins to destroy, and pits full of potatoes and beetroot; the army had been without victual, and now it fairly run riot, the first comers, as you might expect, making a clean sweep of everything.

"I was one of the last to come up. Luckily for me, sleep was the one thing that I longed for just then. I caught sight

of a barn and went into it. I looked round and saw a score of generals and officers of high rank, all of them men who, without flattery, might be called great. Junot was there, and Narbonne, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, and all the chiefs of the army. There were common soldiers there as well, not one of whom would have given up his bed of straw to a marshal of France. Some who were leaning their backs against the wall had dropped off to sleep where they stood, because there was no room to lie down; others lay stretched out on the floor—it was a mass of men packed together so closely for the sake of warmth, that I looked about in vain for a nook to lie down in. I walked over this flooring of human bodies; some of the men growled, the others said nothing, but no one budged. They would not have moved out of the way of a cannon ball just then; but under the circumstances, one was not obliged to practise the maxims laid down by the Child's Guide to Manners. Groping about, I saw at the end of the barn a sort of ledge up above in the roof; no one had thought of scrambling up to it, possibly no one had felt equal to the effort. I clambered up and ensconced myself upon it; and as I lay there at full length, I looked down at the men huddled together like sheep below. It was a pitiful sight, yet it almost made me laugh. A man here and there was gnawing a frozen carrot, with a kind of animal satisfaction expressed in his face; and thunderous snores came from generals who lay muffled up in ragged cloaks. The whole barn was lighted by a blazing pine log; it might have set the place on fire, and no one would have troubled to get up and put it out.

"I lay down on my back, and, naturally, just before I dropped off, my eyes traveled to the roof above me, and then I saw that the main beam which bore the weight of the joists was being slightly shaken from east to west. The blessed thing danced about in fine style. 'Gentlemen,' said I, 'one of our friends outside has a mind to warm himself at our expense.' A few moments more and the beam was sure to come down. 'Gentlemen! gentlemen!' I shouted, 'we shall

all be killed in a minute! Look at the beam there!' and I made such a noise that my bed-fellows awoke at last. Well, sir, they all stared up at the beam, and then those who had been sleeping turned round and went off to sleep again, while those who were eating did not even stop to answer me.

"Seeing how things were, there was nothing for it but to get up and leave my place, and run the risk of finding it taken by somebody else, for all the lives of this heap of heroes were at stake. So out I go. I turn the corner of the barn and come upon a great devil of a Würtemberger, who was tugging at the beam with a certain enthusiasm. 'Aho! aho!' I shouted, trying to make him understand that he must desist from his toil. *'Gehe mir aus dem Gesicht, oder ich schlag dich todt!*—Get out of my sight, or I will kill you,' he cried. 'Ah! yes, just so, *Qué mire aous dem guesit,*' I answered; 'but that is not the point.' I picked up his gun that he had left on the ground, and broke his back with it; then I turned in again, and went off to sleep. Now you know the whole business."

"But that was a case of self-defence, in which one man suffered for the good of many, so you have nothing to reproach yourself with,' said Benassis.

"The rest of them thought that it had only been my fancy; but fancy or no, a good many of them are living comfortably in fine houses to-day, without feeling their hearts oppressed by gratitude."

"Then would you only do people a good turn in order to receive that exorbitant interest called gratitude?" said Benassis, laughing. "That would be asking a great deal for your outlay."

"Oh, I know quite well that all the merit of a good deed evaporates at once if it benefits the doer in the slightest degree," said Genestas. "If he tells the story of it, the toll brought in to his vanity is a sufficient substitute for gratitude. But if every doer of kindly actions always held his tongue about them, those who reaped the benefits would hardly say very much either. Now the people, according to your system,

stand in need of examples, and how are they to hear of them amid this general reticence? Again, there is this poor pontooner of ours, who saved the whole French army, and who was never able to tell his tale to any purpose; suppose that he had lost the use of his limbs, would the consciousness of what he had done have found him in bread? Answer me that, philosopher!"

"Perhaps the rules of morality cannot be absolute," Benassis answered; "though this is a dangerous idea, for it leaves the egoist free to settle cases of conscience in his own favor. Listen, captain; is not the man who never swerves from the principles of morality greater than he who transgresses them, even through necessity? Would not our veteran, dying of hunger, and unable to help himself, be worthy of rank with Homer? Human life is doubtless a final trial of virtue as of genius, for both of which a better world is waiting. Virtue and genius seem to me to be the fairest forms of that complete and constant surrender of self that Jesus Christ came among men to teach. Genius sheds its light in the world and lives in poverty all its days, and virtue sacrifices itself in silence for the general good."

"I quite agree with you, sir," said Genestas; "but those who dwell on earth are men after all, and not angels; we are not perfect."

"That is quite true," Benassis answered. "And as for errors, I myself have abused the indulgence. But ought we not to aim, at any rate, at perfection? Is not virtue a fair ideal which the soul must always keep before it, a standard set up by Heaven?"

"Amen," said the soldier. "An upright man is a magnificent thing, I grant you; but, on the other hand, you must admit that virtue is a divinity who may indulge in a scrap of gossip now and then in the strictest propriety."

The doctor smiled, but there was a melancholy bitterness in his tone as he said, "Ah! sir, you regard things with the lenience natural to those who live at peace with themselves; and I with all the severity of one who sees much that he would fain obliterate in the story of his life."

The two horsemen reached a cottage beside the bed of the torrent, the doctor dismounted and went into the house. Genestas, on the threshold, looked over the bright spring landscape that lay without, and then at the dark interior of the cottage, where a man was lying in bed. Benassis examined his patient, and suddenly exclaimed, "My good woman, it is no use my coming here unless you carry out my instructions! You have been giving him bread; you want to kill your husband, I suppose? Botheration! If after this you give him anything besides tisane of couch-grass, I will never set foot in here again, and you can look where you like for another doctor."

"But, dear M. Benassis, my old man was starving, and when he had eaten nothing for a whole fortnight——"

"Oh, yes, yes. Now will you listen to me. If you let your husband eat a single mouthful of bread before I give him leave to take solid food, you will kill him, do you hear?"

"He shall not have anything, sir. Is he any better?" she asked, following the doctor to the door.

"Why, no. You have made him worse by feeding him. Shall I never get it into your stupid heads that you must not stuff people who are being dieted?"

"The peasants are incorrigible," Benassis went on, speaking to Genestas. "If a patient has eaten nothing for two or three days, they think he is at death's door, and they cram him with soup or wine or something. Here is a wretched woman for you that has all but killed her husband."

"Kill my husband with a little mite of a sop in wine!"

"Certainly, my good woman. It amazes me that he is still alive after that mess you cooked for him. Mind that you do exactly as I have told you."

"Yes, dear sir, I would far rather die myself than lose him."

"Oh! as to that I shall soon see. I shall come again to-morrow evening to bleed him."

"Let us walk along the side of the stream," Benassis said to Genestas; "there is only a footpath between this cottage

and the next house where I must pay a call. That man's little boy will hold our horses."

"You must admire this lovely valley of ours a little," he went on; "it is like an English garden, is it not? The laborer who lives in the cottage which we are going to visit has never got over the death of one of his children. The eldest boy, he was only a lad, would try to do a man's work last harvest-tide; it was beyond his strength, and before the autumn was out he died of a decline. This is the first case of really strong fatherly love that has come under my notice. As a rule, when their children die, the peasants' regret is for the loss of a useful chattel, and a part of their stock-in-trade, and the older the child, the heavier their sense of loss. A grown-up son or daughter is so much capital to the parents. But this poor fellow really loved that boy of his. 'Nothing can comfort me for my loss,' he said one day when I came across him out in the fields. He had forgotten all about his work, and was standing there motionless, leaning on his scythe; he had picked up his hone, it lay in his hand, and he had forgotten to use it. He has never spoken since of his grief to me, but he has grown sad and silent. Just now it is one of his little girls who is ill."

Benassis and his guest reached the little house as they talked. It stood beside a pathway that led to a bark-mill. They saw a man about forty years of age, standing under a willow tree, eating bread that had been rubbed with a clove of garlic.

"Well, Gasnier, is the little one doing better?"

"I do not know, sir," he said dejectedly, "you will see; my wife is sitting with her. In spite of all your care, I am very much afraid that death will come to empty my home for me."

"Do not lose heart, Gasnier. Death is too busy to take up his abode in any dwelling."

Benassis went into the house, followed by the father. Half an hour later he came out again. The mother was with him this time, and he spoke to her, "You need have no anxiety about her now; follow out my instructions; she is out of danger."

"If you are growing tired of this sort of thing," the doctor said to the officer, as he mounted his horse, "I can put you on the way to the town, and you can return."

"No, I am not tired of it, I give you my word."

"But you will only see cottages everywhere, and they are all alike; nothing, to outward seeming, is more monotonous than the country."

"Let us go on," said the officer.

They rode on in this way for several hours, and after going from one side of the canton to the other, they returned towards evening to the precincts of the town.

"I must just go over there," the doctor said to Genestas, as he pointed out a place where a cluster of elm-trees grew. "Those trees may possibly be two hundred years old," he went on, "and that is where the woman lives, on whose account the lad came to fetch me last night at dinner, with a message that she had turned quite white."

"Was it anything serious?"

"No," said Benassis, "an effect of pregnancy. It is the last month with her, a time at which some women suffer from spasms. But by way of precaution, I must go in any case to make sure that there are no further alarming symptoms; I shall see her through her confinement myself. And, moreover, I should like to show you one of our new industries; there is a brick-field here. It is a good road; shall we gallop?"

"Will your animal keep up with mine?" asked Genestas. "Heigh! Neptune!" he called to his horse, and in a moment the officer had been carried far ahead, and was lost to sight in a cloud of dust, but in spite of the paces of his horse he still heard the doctor beside him. At a word from Benassis his own horse left the commandant so far behind that the latter only came up with him at the gate of the brick-field, where the doctor was quietly fastening the bridle to the gate-post.

"The devil take it!" cried Genestas, after a look at the horse, that was neither sweated nor blown. "What kind of animal have you there?"

"Ah!" said the doctor, "you took him for a screw! The history of this fine fellow would take up too much time just now; let it suffice to say that Roustan is a thoroughbred barb from the Atlas mountains, and a Barbary horse is as good as an Arab. This one of mine will gallop up the mountain roads without turning a hair, and will never miss his footing in a canter along the brink of a precipice. He was a present to me, and I think that I deserved it, for in this way a father sought to repay me for his daughter's life. She is one of the wealthiest heiresses in Europe, and she was at the brink of death when I found her on the road to Savoy. If I were to tell you how I cured that young lady, you would take me for a quack. Aha! that is the sound of the bells on the horses and the rumbling of a wagon; it is coming along this way; let us see, perhaps that is Vigneau himself; and if so, take a good look at him!"

In another moment the officer saw a team of four huge horses, like those which are owned by prosperous farmers in Brie. The harness, the little bells, and the knots of braid in their manes, were clean and smart. The great wagon itself was painted bright blue, and perched aloft in it sat a stalwart, sunburned youth, who shouldered his whip like a gun and whistled a tune.

"No," said Benassis, "that is only the wagoner. But see how the master's prosperity in business is reflected by all his belongings, even by the carter's wagon! Is it not a sign of a capacity for business not very often met with in remote country places?"

"Yes, yes, it all looks very smart indeed," the officer answered.

"Well, Vigneau has two more wagons and teams like that one, and he has a small pony besides for business purposes, for he does a trade over a wide area. And only four years ago he had nothing in the world! Stay, that is a mistake—he had some debts. But let us go in."

"Is Mme. Vigneau in the house?" Benassis asked of the young wagoner.

"She is out in the garden, sir; I saw her just now by the hedge down yonder; I will go and tell her that you are here."

Genestas followed Benassis across a wide open space with a hedge about it. In one corner various heaps of clay had been piled up, destined for tiles and pantiles, and a stack of brushwood and logs (fuel for the kiln no doubt) lay in another part of the enclosure. Farther away some workmen were pounding chalk stones and tempering the clay in a space enclosed by hurdles. The tiles, both round and square, were made under the great elms opposite the gateway, in a vast green arbor bounded by the roofs of the drying-shed, and near this last the yawning mouth of the kiln was visible. Some long-handled shovels lay about the worn cinder path. A second row of buildings had been erected parallel with these. There was a sufficiently wretched dwelling which housed the family, and some outbuildings—sheds and stables and a barn. The cleanliness that predominated throughout, and the thorough repair in which everything was kept, spoke well for the vigilance of the master's eyes. Some poultry and pigs wandered at large over the field.

"Vigneau's predecessor," said Benassis, "was a good-for-nothing, a lazy rascal who cared about nothing but drink. He had been a workman himself; he could keep a fire in his kiln and could put a price on his work, and that was about all he knew; he had no energy, and no idea of business. If no one came to buy his wares of him, they simply stayed on hand and were spoiled, and so he lost the value of them. So he died of want at last. He had ill-treated his wife till she was almost idiotic, and she lived in a state of abject wretchedness. It was so painful to see this laziness and incurable stupidity, and I so much disliked the sight of the tile-works, that I never came this way if I could help it. Luckily, both the man and his wife were old people. One fine day the tile-maker had a paralytic stroke, and I had him removed to the hospital at Grenoble at once. The owner of the tile-works agreed to take it over without disputing about its condition, and I looked round for new tenants who would take their part in improving the industries of the canton.

"Mme. Gravier's waiting-maid had married a poor workman, who was earning so little with the potter who employed him that he could not support his household. He listened to my advice, and actually had sufficient courage to take a lease of our tile-works, when he had not so much as a penny. He came and took up his abode here, taught his wife, her aged mother, and his own mother how to make tiles, and made workmen of them. How they managed, I do not know, upon my honor! Vigneau probably borrowed fuel to heat his kiln, he certainly worked by day, and fetched in his materials in basket-loads by night; in short, no one knew what boundless energy he brought to bear upon his enterprise; and the two old mothers, clad in rags, worked like negroes. In this way Vigneau contrived to fire several batches, and lived for the first year on bread that was hardly won by the toil of his household.

"Still, he made a living. His courage, patience, and sterling worth interested many people in him, and he began to be known. He was indefatigable. He would hurry over to Grenoble in the morning, and sell his bricks and tiles there; then he would return home about the middle of the day, and go back again to the town at night. He seemed to be in several places at once. Towards the end of the first year he took two little lads to help him. Seeing how things were, I lent him some money, and since then from year to year the fortunes of the family have steadily improved. After the second year was over the two old mothers no longer moulded bricks nor pounded stones; they looked after the little gardens, made the soup, mended the clothes, they did spinning in the evenings, and gathered firewood in the daytime; while the young wife, who can read and write, kept the accounts. Vigneau had a small horse, and rode on his business errands about the neighborhood; next he thoroughly studied the art of brick and tile making, discovered how to make excellent square white paving-tiles, and sold them for less than the usual prices. In the third year he had a cart and a pair of horses, and at the same time his wife's appearance became

almost elegant. Everything about his household improved with the improvement in his business, and everywhere there was the same neatness, method, and thrift that had been the making of his little fortune.

"At last he had work enough for six men, to whom he pays good wages; he employs a wagoner, and everything about him wears an air of prosperity. Little by little, in short, by dint of taking pains and extending his business, his income has increased. He bought the tile-works last year, and next year he will rebuild his house. To-day all the worthy folk there are well clothed and in good health. His wife, who used to be so thin and pale when the burden of her husband's cares and anxieties used to press so hardly upon her, has recovered her good looks, and has grown quite young and pretty again. The two old mothers are thoroughly happy, and take the deepest interest in every detail of the housekeeping or of the business. Work has brought money, and the money that brought freedom from care brought health and plenty and happiness. The story of this household is a living history in miniature of the Commune since I have known it, and of all young industrial states. The tile factory that used to look so empty, melancholy, ill-kept, and useless, is now in full work, astir with life, and well stocked with everything required. There is a good stock of wood here, and all the raw material for the season's work: for, as you know, tiles can only be made during a few months in the year, between June and September. Is it not a pleasure to see all this activity? My tile-maker has done his share of the work in every building in the place. He is always wide awake, always coming and going, always busy—'the devourer,' they call him in these parts."

Benassis had scarcely finished speaking when the wicket gate which gave entrance to the garden opened, and a nicely-dressed young woman appeared. She came forward as quickly as her condition allowed, though the two horsemen hastened towards her. Her attire somewhat recalled her former quality of ladies' maid, for she wore a pretty cap, a

pink dress, a silk apron, and white stockings. Mme. Vigneau, in short, was a nice-looking woman, sufficiently plump, and if she was somewhat sunburned, her natural complexion must have been very fair. There were a few lines still left on her forehead, traced there by the troubles of past days, but she had a bright and winsome face. She spoke in a persuasive voice, as she saw that the doctor came no further, "Will you not do me the honor of coming inside and resting for a moment, M. Benassis?"

"Certainly we will. Come this way, captain."

"The gentleman must be very hot! Will you take a little milk or some wine? M. Benassis, please try a little of the wine that my husband has been so kind as to buy for my confinement. You will tell me if it is good."

"You have a good man for your husband."

"Yes, sir," she turned and spoke in quiet tones, "I am very well off."

"We will not take anything, Mme. Vigneau; I only came round this way to see that nothing troublesome had happened."

"Nothing," she said. "I was busy out in the garden, as you saw, turning the soil over for the sake of something to do."

Then the two old mothers came out to speak to Benassis, and the young wagoner planted himself in the middle of the yard, in a spot from whence he could have a good view of the doctor.

"Let us see, let me have your hand," said Benassis, addressing Mme. Vigneau; and as he carefully felt her pulse, he stood in silence, absorbed in thought. The three women, meanwhile, scrutinized the commandant with the undisguised curiosity that country people do not scruple to express.

"Nothing could be better!" cried the doctor cheerily.

"Will she be confined soon?" both the mothers asked together.

"This week beyond a doubt. Is Vigneau away from home?" he asked, after a pause.

"Yes, sir," the young wife answered; "he is hurrying about

settling his business affairs, so as to be able to stay at home during my confinement, the dear man!"

"Well, my children, go on and prosper; continue to increase your wealth and to add to your family."

The cleanliness of the almost ruinous dwelling filled Genestas with admiration.

Benassis saw the officer's astonishment, and said, "There is no one like Mme. Vigneau for keeping a house clean and tidy like this. I wish that several people in the town would come here to take a lesson."

The tile-maker's wife blushed and turned her head away; but the faces of the two old mothers beamed with pleasure at the doctor's words, and the three women walked with them to the spot where the horses were waiting.

"Well, now," the doctor said to the two old women, "here is happiness for you both! Were you not longing to be grandmothers?"

"Oh, do not talk about it," said the young wife; "they will drive me crazy among them. My two mothers wish for a boy, and my husband would like to have a little girl. It will be very difficult to please them all, I think."

"But you yourself," asked Benassis; "what is your wish?"

"Ah, sir, I wish for a child of my own."

"There! She is a mother already, you see," said the doctor to the officer, as he laid his hand on the bridle of his horse.

"Good-bye, M. Benassis; my husband will be sadly disappointed to learn that you have been here when he was not at home to see you."

"He has not forgotten to send the thousand tiles to the Grange-aux-Belles for me?"

"You know quite well, sir, that he would keep all the orders in the canton waiting to serve you. Why, taking your money is the thing that troubles him most; but I always tell him that your crowns bring luck with them, and so they do."

"Good-bye," said Benassis.

A little group gathered about the bars across the entrance to the tile-works. The three women, the young wagoner, and

two workmen who had left off work to greet the doctor, lingered there to have the pleasure of being with him until the last moment, as we are wont to linger with those we love. The promptings of men's hearts must everywhere be the same, and in every land friendship expresses itself in the same gracious ways.

Benassis looked at the height of the sun and spoke to his companion:

"There are still two hours of daylight left; and if you are not too hungry, we will go to see some one with whom I nearly always spend the interval between the last of my visits and the hour for dinner. She is a charming girl whom every one here calls my 'good friend.' That is the name that they usually give to an affianced bride; but you must not imagine that there is the slightest imputation of any kind implied or intended by the use of the word in this case. Poor child, the care that I have taken of her has, as may be imagined, made her an object of jealousy, but the general opinion entertained as to my character has prevented any spiteful gossip. If no one understands the apparent caprice that has led me to make an allowance to La Fosseuse, so that she can live without being compelled to work, nobody has any doubts as to her character. I have watched over her with friendly care, and every one knows that I should never hesitate to marry her if my affection for her exceeded the limits of friendship. But no woman exists for me here in the canton or anywhere else," said the doctor, forcing a smile. "Some natures feel a tyrannous need to attach themselves to some one thing or being which they single out from among the beings and things around them; this need is felt most keenly by a man of quick sympathies, and all the more pressingly if his life has been made desolate. So, trust me, it is a favorable sign if a man is strongly attached to his dog or his horse! Among the suffering flock which chance has given into my care, this poor little sufferer has come to be for me like the pet lamb that the shepherd lasses deck with ribbons in my own sunny land of Languedoc; they talk to it and allow it to find pasture

by the side of the cornfields, and its leisurely pace is never hurried by the shepherd's dog."

Benassis stood with his hand on his horse's mane as he spoke, ready to spring into the saddle, but making no effort to do so, as though the thoughts that stirred in him were but little in keeping with rapid movements.

"Let us go," he said at last; "come with me and pay her a visit. I am taking you to see her; does not that tell you that I treat her as a sister?"

As they rode on their way again, Genestas said to the doctor, "Will you regard it as inquisitiveness on my part if I ask to hear more of La Fosseuse? I have come to know the story of many lives through you, and hers cannot be less interesting than some of these."

Benassis stopped his horse as he answered. "Perhaps you will not share in the feelings of interest awakened in me by La Fosseuse. Her fate is like my own; we have both alike missed our vocation; it is the similarity of our lots that occasions my sympathy for her and the feelings that I experience at the sight of her. You either followed your natural bent when you entered upon a military career, or you took a liking for your calling after you had adopted it, otherwise you would not have borne the heavy yoke of military discipline till now; you, therefore, cannot understand the sorrows of a soul that must always feel renewed within it the stir of longings that can never be realized; nor the pining existence of a creature forced to live in an alien sphere. Such sufferings as these are known only to these natures and to God who sends their afflictions, for they alone can know how deeply the events of life affect them. You yourself have seen the miseries produced by long wars, till they have almost ceased to impress you, but have you never detected a trace of sadness in your mind at the sight of a tree bearing sere leaves in the midst of spring, some tree that is pining and dying because it has been planted in soil in which it could not find the sustenance required for its full development? Ever since my twentieth year, there has been something painful and melancholy for

me about the drooping of a stunted plant, and now I cannot bear the sight and turn my head away. My youthful sorrow was a vague presentiment of the sorrows of my later life; it was a kind of sympathy between my present and a future dimly foreshadowed by the life of the tree that before its time was going the way of all trees and men."

"I thought that you had suffered when I saw how kind you were."

"You see, sir," the doctor went on without any reply to the remark made by Genestas, "that to speak of La Fosseuse is to speak of myself. La Fosseuse is a plant in an alien soil; a human plant moreover, consumed by sad thoughts that have their source in the depths of her nature, and that never cease to multiply. The poor girl is never well and strong. The soul within her kills the body. This fragile creature was suffering from the sorest of all troubles, a trouble which receives the least possible sympathy from our selfish world, and how could I look on with indifferent eyes? for I, a man, strong to wrestle with pain, was nightly tempted to refuse to bear the burden of a sorrow like hers. Perhaps I might actually have refused to bear it but for a thought of religion which soothes my impatience and fills my heart with sweet illusions. Even if we were not children of the same Father in heaven, La Fosseuse would still be my sister in suffering!"

Benassis pressed his knees against his horse's sides, and swept ahead of Commandant Genestas, as if he shrank from continuing this conversation any further. When their horses were once more cantering abreast of each other, he spoke again: "Nature has created this poor girl for sorrow," he said, "as she has created other women for joy. It is impossible to do otherwise than believe in a future life at the sight of natures thus predestined to suffer. La Fosseuse is sensitive and highly strung. If the weather is dark and cloudy, she is depressed; she 'weeps when the sky is weeping,' a phrase of her own; she sings with the birds; she grows happy and serene under a cloudless sky; the loveliness of a bright day passes

into her face; a soft sweet perfume is an inexhaustible pleasure to her; I have seen her take delight the whole day long in the scent breathed forth by some mignonette; and, after one of those rainy mornings that bring out all the soul of the flowers and give indescribable freshness and brightness to the day, she seems to overflow with gladness like the green world around her. If it is close and hot, and there is thunder in the air, La Fosseuse feels a vague trouble that nothing can soothe. She lies on her bed, complains of numberless different ills, and does not know what ails her. In answer to my questions, she tells me that her bones are melting, that she is dissolving into water; her 'heart has left her,' to quote another of her sayings.

"I have sometimes come upon the poor child suddenly and found her in tears, as she gazed at the sunset effects we sometimes see here among our mountains, when bright masses of cloud gather and crowd together and pile themselves above the golden peaks of the hills. 'Why are you crying, little one?' I have asked her. 'I do not know, sir,' has been the answer; 'I have grown so stupid with looking up there; I have looked and looked, till I hardly know where I am.' 'But what do you see there?' 'I cannot tell you, sir,' and you might question her in this way all the evening, yet you would never draw a word from her; but she would look at you, and every glance would seem full of thoughts, or she would sit with tears in her eyes, scarcely saying a word, apparently rapt in musing. Those musings of hers are so profound that you fall under the spell of them; on me, at least, she has the effect of a cloud overcharged with electricity. One day I plied her with questions; I tried with all my might to make her talk; at last I let fall a few rather hasty words; and, well—she burst into tears.

"At other times La Fosseuse is bright and winning, active, merry, and sprightly; she enjoys talking, and the ideas which she expresses are fresh and original. She is however quite unable to apply herself steadily to any kind of work. When she was out in the fields she used to spend whole hours in

looking at a flower, in watching the water flow, in gazing at the wonders in the depths of the clear, still river pools, at the picturesque mosaic made up of pebbles and earth and sand, of water plants and green moss, and the brown soil washed down by the stream, a deposit full of soft shades of color, and of hues that contrast strangely with each other.

"When I first came to the district the poor girl was starving. It hurt her pride to accept the bread of others; and it was only when driven to the last extremity of want and suffering that she could bring herself to ask for charity. The feeling that this was a disgrace would often give her energy, and for several days she worked in the fields; but her strength was soon exhausted, and illness obliged her to leave the work that she had begun. She had scarcely recovered when she went to a farm on the outskirts of the town and asked to be taken on to look after the cattle; she did her work well and intelligently, but after a while she left without giving any reason for so doing. The constant toil, day after day, was no doubt too heavy a yoke for one who is all independence and caprice. Then she set herself to look for mushrooms or for truffles, going over to Grenoble to sell them. But the gaudy trifles in the town were very tempting, the few small coins in her hand seemed to be great riches; she would forget her poverty and buy ribbons and finery, without a thought for tomorrow's bread. But if some other girl here in the town took a fancy to her brass crucifix, her agate heart or her velvet ribbon, she would make them over to her at once, glad to give happiness, for she lives by generous impulses. So La Fosseuse was loved and pitied and despised by turns. Everything in her nature was a cause of suffering to her—her indolence, her kindness of heart, her coquetry; for she is coquettish, dainty, and inquisitive, in short, she is a woman; she is as simple as a child, and, like a child, she is carried away by her tastes and her impressions. If you tell her about some noble deed, she trembles, her color rises, her heart throbs fast, and she sheds tears of joy; if you begin a story about robbers, she turns pale with terror. You could

not find a more sincere, open-hearted, and scrupulously loyal nature anywhere; if you were to give a hundred gold pieces into her keeping, she would bury them in some out-of-the-way nook and beg her bread as before."

There was a change in Benassis' tone as he uttered these last words.

"I once determined to put her to the proof," he said, "and I repented of it. It is like espionage to bring a test to bear upon another, is it not? It means that we suspect them at any rate."

Here the doctor paused, as though some inward reflection engrossed him; he was quite unconscious of the embarrassment that his last remark had caused to his companion, who busied himself with disentangling the reins in order to hide his confusion. Benassis soon resumed his talk.

"I should like to find a husband for my Fosseuse. I should be glad to make over one of my farms to some good fellow who would make her happy. And she would be happy. The poor girl would love her children to distraction; for motherhood, which develops the whole of a woman's nature, would give full scope to her overflowing sentiments. She has never cared for any one, however. Yet her impressionable nature is a danger to her. She knows this herself, and when she saw that I recognized it, she admitted the excitability of her temperament to me. She belongs to the small minority of women whom the slightest contact with others causes to vibrate perilously; so that she must be made to value herself on her discretion and her womanly pride. She is as wild and shy as a swallow! Ah! what a wealth of kindness there is in her! Nature meant her to be a rich woman; she would be so beneficent: for a well-loved woman; she would be so faithful and true. She is only twenty-two years old, and is sinking already beneath the weight of her soul; a victim to highly-strung nerves, to an organization either too delicate or too full of power. A passionate love for a faithless lover would drive her mad, my poor Fosseuse! I have made a study of her temperament, recognized the reality of her pro-

longed nervous attacks, and of the swift mysterious recurrence of her uplifted moods. I found that they were immediately dependent on atmospheric changes and on the variations of the moon, a fact which I have carefully verified; and since then I have cared for her, as a creature unlike all others, for she is a being whose ailing existence I alone can understand. As I have told you, she is the pet lamb. But you shall see her; this is her cottage."

They had come about one-third of the way up the mountain side. Low bushes grew on either hand along the steep paths which they were ascending at a foot pace. At last, at a turn in one of the paths, Genestas saw La Fosseuse's dwelling, which stood on one of the largest knolls on the mountain. Around it was a green sloping space of lawn about three acres in extent, planted with trees, and surrounded by a wall high enough to serve as a fence, but not so high as to shut out the view of the landscape. Several rivulets that had their source in this garden formed little cascades among the trees. The brick-built cottage with a low roof that projected several feet was a charming detail in the landscape. It consisted of a ground floor and a single story, and stood facing the south. All the windows were in the front of the house, for its small size and lack of depth from back to front made other openings unnecessary. The doors and shutters were painted green, and the underside of the penthouses had been lined with deal boards in the German fashion, and painted white. The rustic charm of the whole little dwelling lay in its spotless cleanliness.

Climbing plants and briar roses grew about the house; a great walnut tree had been allowed to remain among the flowering acacias and trees that bore sweet-scented blossoms, and a few weeping willows had been set by the little streams in the garden space. A thick belt of pines and beeches grew behind the house, so that the picturesque little dwelling was brought out into strong relief by the sombre width of background. At that hour of the day, the air was fragrant with the scents from the hillsides and the perfume from La Fosseuse's garden.

The sky overhead was clear and serene, but low clouds hung on the horizon, and the far-off peaks had begun to take the deep rose hues that the sunset often brings. At the height which they had reached the whole valley lay before their eyes, from distant Grenoble to the little lake at the foot of the circle of crags by which Genestas had passed on the previous day. Some little distance above the house a line of poplars on the hill indicated the highway that led to Grenoble. Rays of sunlight fell slantwise across the little town which glittered like a diamond, for the soft red light which poured over it like a flood was reflected by all its window-panes. Genestas reined in his horse at the sight, and pointed to the dwellings in the valley, to the new town, and to La Fosseuse's house.

"Since the victory of Wagram, and Napoleon's return to the Tuileries in 1815," he said, with a sigh, "nothing has so stirred me as the sight of all this. I owe this pleasure to you, sir, for you have taught me to see beauty in a landscape."

"Yes," said the doctor, smiling as he spoke, "it is better to build towns than to storm them."

"Oh! sir, how about the taking of Moscow and the surrender of Mantua! Why, you do not really know what that means! Is it not a glory for all of us? You are a good man, but Napoleon also was a good man. If it had not been for England, you both would have understood each other, and our Emperor would never have fallen. There are no spies here," said the officer, looking around him, "and I can say openly that I love him, now that he is dead! What a ruler! He knew every man when he saw him! He would have made you a Councillor of State, for he was a great administrator himself; even to the point of knowing how many cartridges were left in the men's boxes after an action. Poor man! While you were talking about La Fosseuse, I thought of him, and how he was lying dead in St. Helena! Was that the kind of climate and country to suit *him,* whose seat had been a throne, and who had lived with his feet in the stirrups; *hein?* They say that he used to work in the garden. The deuce! He was not made to plant cabbages. . . . And

now we must serve the Bourbons, and loyally, sir; for, after all, France is France, as you were saying yesterday."

Genestas dismounted as he uttered these last words, and mechanically followed the example set by Benassis, who fastened his horse's bridle to a tree.

"Can she be away?" said the doctor, when he did not see La Fosseuse on the threshold. They went into the house, but there was no one in the sitting-room on the ground floor.

"She must have head the sound of a second horse," said Benassis, with a smile, "and has gone upstairs to put on her cap, or her sash, or some piece of finery."

He left Genestas alone, and went upstairs in search of La Fosseuse. The commandant made a survey of the room. He noticed the pattern of the paper that covered the walls—roses scattered over a gray background, and the straw matting that did duty for a carpet on the floor. The armchair, the table, and the smaller chairs were made of wood from which the bark had not been removed. The room was not without ornament; some flower-stands, as they might be called, made of osiers and wooden hoops, had been filled with moss and flowers, and the windows were draped by white dimity curtains bordered with a scarlet fringe. There was a mirror above the chimney-piece, where a plain china jar stood between two candlesticks. Some calico lay on the table; shirts, apparently, had been cut out and begun, several pairs of gussets were finished, and a work-basket, scissors, needles, and thread, and all a needle-woman's requirements lay beside them. Everything was as fresh and clean as a shell that the sea has tossed up on the beach. Genestas saw that a kitchen lay on the other side of the passage, and that the staircase was at the farther end of it. The upper story, like the ground floor, evidently consisted of two rooms only. "Come, do not be frightened," Benassis was saying to La Fosseuse; "come down-stairs!"

Genestas promptly retreated into the sitting-room when he heard these words, and in another moment a slender girl, well and gracefully made, appeared in the doorway. She wore a

gown of cambric, covered with narrow pink stripes, and cut low at the throat, so as to display a muslin chemisette. Shyness and timidity had brought the color to a face which had nothing very remarkable about it save a certain flatness of feature which called to mind the Cossack and Russian countenances that since the disasters of 1814 have unfortunately come to be so widely known in France. La Fosseuse was, in fact, very like these men of the North. Her nose turned up at the end, and was sunk in her face, her mouth was wide and her chin small, her hands and arms were red and, like her feet, were of the peasant type, large and strong. Although she had been used to an outdoor life, to exposure to the sun and the scorching summer winds, her complexion had the bleached look of withered grass; but after the first glance this made her face more interesting, and there was such a sweet expression in her blue eyes, so much grace about her movements, and such music in her voice, that little as her features seemed to harmonize with the disposition which Benassis had praised to the commandant, the officer recognized in her the capricious and ailing creature, condemned to suffering by a nature that had been thwarted in its growth.

La Fosseuse deftly stirred the fire of dry branches and turfs of peat, then sat down in an armchair and took up one of the shirts that she had begun. She sat there under the officer's eyes, half bashful, afraid to look up, and calm to all appearance; but her bodice rose and fell with the rapid breathing that betrayed her nervousness, and it struck Genestas that her figure was very graceful.

"Well, my poor child, is your work going on nicely?" said Benassis, taking up the material intended for the shirts, and passing it through his fingers.

La Fosseuse gave the doctor a timid and beseeching glance.

"Do not scold me, sir," she entreated; "I have not touched them to-day, although they were ordered by you, and for people who need them very badly. But the weather has been so fine! I wandered out and picked a quantity of mushrooms and white truffles, and took them over to Jacquotte;

she was very much pleased, for some people are coming to dinner. I was so glad that I thought of it; something seemed to tell me to go to look for them."

She began to ply her needle again.

"You have a very pretty house here, mademoiselle," said Genestas, addressing her.

"It is not mine at all, sir," she said, looking at the stranger, and her eyes seemed to grow red and tearful; "it belongs to M. Benassis," and she turned towards the doctor with a gentle expression on her face.

"You know quite well, my child, that you will never have to leave it," he said, as he took her hand in his.

La Fosseuse suddenly rose and left the room.

"Well," said the doctor, addressing the officer, "what do you think of her?"

"There is something strangely touching about her," Genestas answered. "How very nicely you have fitted up this little nest of hers!"

"Bah! a wall-paper at fifteen or twenty *sous;* it was carefully chosen, but that was all. The furniture is nothing very much either, my basket-maker made it for me; he wanted to show his gratitude; and La Fosseuse made the curtains herself out of a few yards of calico. This little house of hers, and her simple furniture, seem pretty to you, because you come upon them up here on a hillside in a forlorn part of the world where you did not expect to find things clean and tidy. The reason of the prettiness is a kind of harmony between the little house and its surroundings. Nature has set picturesque groups of trees and running streams about it, and has scattered her fairest flowers among the grass, her sweet-scented wild strawberry blossoms, and her lovely violets. . . . Well, what is the matter?" asked Benassis, as La Fosseuse came back to them.

"Oh! nothing, nothing," she answered. "I fancied that one of my chickens was missing, and had not been shut up."

Her remark was disingenuous, but this was only noticed by the doctor, who said in her ear, "You have been crying!"

"Why do you say things like that to me before some one else?" she asked in reply.

"Mademoiselle," said Genestas, "it is a great pity that you live here all by yourself; you ought to have a mate in such a charming cage as this."

"That is true," she said, "but what would you have? I am poor, and I am hard to please. I feel that it would not suit me at all to carry the soup out into the fields, nor to push a hand-cart; to feel the misery of those whom I should love, and have no power to put an end to it; to carry my children in my arms all day, and patch and re-patch a man's rags. The curé tells me that such thoughts as these are not very Christian; I know that myself, but how can I help it? There are days when I would rather eat a morsel of dry bread than cook anything for my dinner. Why would you have me worry some man's life out with my failings? He would perhaps work himself to death to satisfy my whims, and that would not be right. Pshaw! an unlucky lot has fallen to me, and I ought to bear it by myself."

"And besides, she is a born do-nothing," said Benassis. "We must take my poor Fosseuse as we find her. But all that she has been saying to you simply means that she has never loved as yet," he added, smiling. Then he rose and went out on to the lawn for a moment.

"You must be very fond of M. Benassis?" asked Genestas.

"Oh! yes, sir; and there are plenty of people hereabouts who feel as I do—that they would be glad to do anything in the world for him. And yet he who cures other people has some trouble of his own that nothing can cure. You are his friend, perhaps you know what it is? Who could have given pain to such a man, who is the very image of God on earth? I know a great many here who think that the corn grows faster if he has passed by their field in the morning."

"And what do you think yourself?"

"I, sir? When I have seen him," she seemed to hesitate, then she went on, "I am happy all the rest of the day."

She bent her head over her work, and plied her needle with unwonted swiftness.

"Well, has the captain been telling you something about Napoleon?" said the doctor, as he came in again.

"Have you see the Emperor, sir?" cried La Fosseuse, gazing at the officer's face with eager curiosity.

"Parbleu!" said Genestas, "hundreds of times!"

"Oh! how I should like to know something about the army!"

"Perhaps we will come to take a cup of coffee with you to-morrow, and you shall hear 'something about the army,' dear child," said Benassis, who laid his hand on her shoulder and kissed her brow. "She is my daughter, you see!" he added, turning to the commandant; "there is something wanting in the day, somehow, when I have not kissed her forehead."

La Fosseuse held Benassis' hand in a tight clasp as she murmured, "Oh! you are very kind!"

They left the house; but she came after them to see them mount. She waited till Genestas was in the saddle, and then whispered in Benassis' ear, "Tell me who that gentleman is?"

"Aha!" said the doctor, putting a foot in the stirrup, "a husband for you, perhaps."

She stood on the spot where they left her, absorbed in watching their progress down the steep path; and when they came past the end of the garden, they saw her already perched on a little heap of stones, so that she might still keep them in view and give them a last nod of farewell.

"There is something very unusual about that girl, sir," Genestas said to the doctor when they had left the house far behind.

"There is, is there not?" he answered. "Many a time I have said to myself that she will make a charming wife, but I can only love her as a sister or a daughter, and in no other way; my heart is dead."

"Has she any relations?" asked Genestas. "What did her father and mother do?"

"Oh, it is quite a long story," answered Benassis. "Neither her father nor mother nor any of her relations are living.

Everything about her down to her name interested me. La Fosseuse was born here in the town. Her father, a laborer from Saint Laurent du Pont, was nicknamed *Le Fosseur,* which is no doubt a contraction of *fossoyeur,* for the office of sexton had been in his family time out of mind. All the sad associations of the graveyard hang about the name. Here as in some other parts of France, there is an old custom, dating from the times of the Latin civilization, in virtue of which a woman takes her husband's name, with the addition of a feminine termination, and this girl has been called La Fosseuse, after her father.

"The laborer had married the waiting-woman of some countess or other who owns an estate at a distance of a few leagues. It was a love-match. Here, as in all country districts, love is a very small element in a marriage. The peasant, as a rule, wants a wife who will bear him children, a housewife who will make good soup and take it out to him in the fields, who will spin and make his shirts and mend his clothes. Such a thing had not happened for a long while in a district where a young man not unfrequently leaves his betrothed for another girl who is richer by three or four acres of land. The fate of Le Fosseur and his wife was scarcely happy enough to induce our Dauphinois to forsake their calculating habits and practical way of regarding things. La Fosseuse, who was a very pretty woman, died when her daughter was born, and her husband's grief for his loss was so great that he followed her within the year, leaving nothing in the world to his little one except an existence whose continuance was very doubtful—a mere feeble flicker of a life. A charitable neighbor took the care of the baby upon herself, and brought her up till she was nine years old. Then the burden of supporting La Fosseuse became too heavy for the good woman; so at the time of year when travelers are passing along the roads, she sent her charge to beg for her living upon the highways.

"One day the little orphan asked for bread at the countess' château, and they kept the child for her mother's sake. She

was to be waiting-maid some day to the daughter of the house, and was brought up to this end. Her young mistress was married five years later; but meanwhile the poor little thing was the victim of all the caprices of wealthy people, whose beneficence for the most part is not to be depended upon even while it lasts. They are generous by fits and starts; sometimes patrons, sometimes friends, sometimes masters, in this way they falsify the already false position of the poor children in whom they interest themselves, and trifle with the hearts, the lives, and futures of their protégées, whom they regard very lightly. From the first La Fosseuse became almost a companion to the young heiress; she was taught to read and write, and her future mistress sometimes amused herself by giving her music lessons. She was treated sometimes as a lady's companion, sometimes as a waiting-maid, and in this way they made an incomplete being of her. She acquired a taste for luxury and for dress, together with manners ill-suited to her real position. She has been roughly schooled by misfortune since then, but the vague feeling that she is destined for a higher lot has not been effaced in her.

"A day came at last, however, a fateful day for the poor girl, when the young countess (who was married by this time) discovered La Fosseuse arrayed in one of her ball dresses, and dancing before a mirror. La Fosseuse was no longer anything but a waiting-maid, and the orphan girl, then sixteen years of age, was dismissed without pity. Her idle ways plunged her once more into poverty; she wandered about begging by the roadside, and working at times as I have told you. Sometimes she thought of drowning herself, sometimes also of giving herself to the first comer; she spent most of her time thinking dark thoughts, lying by the side of a wall in the sun, with her face buried in the grass, and passers-by would sometimes throw a few halfpence to her, simply because she asked them for nothing. One whole year she spent in a hospital at Annecy after heavy toil in the harvest field; she had only undertaken the work in the hope that it would kill her, and that so she might die. You should hear her herself

when she speaks of her feelings and ideas during this time of her life; her simple confidences are often very curious.

"She came back to the little town at last, just about the time when I decided to take up my abode in it. I wanted to understand the minds of the people beneath my rule; her character struck me, and I made a study of it; then when I became aware of her physical infirmities, I determined to watch over her. Perhaps in time she may grow accustomed to work with her needle, but, whatever happens, I have secured her future."

"She is quite alone up there!" said Genestas.

"No. One of my herdswomen sleeps in the house," the doctor answered. "You did not see my farm buildings which lie behind the house. They are hidden by the pine-trees. Oh! she is quite safe. Moreover, there are no *mauvais sujets* here in the valley; if any come among us by any chance, I send them into the army, where they make excellent soldiers."

"Poor girl!" said Genestas.

"Oh! the folk round about do not pity her at all," said Benassis; "on the other hand, they think her very lucky; but there is this difference between her and the other women, God has given strength to them and weakness to her, and they do not see that."

The moment that the two horsemen came out upon the road to Grenoble, Benassis stopped with an air of satisfaction; a different view had suddenly opened out before them; he foresaw its effect upon Genestas, and wished to enjoy his surprise. As far as the eye could see, two green walls sixty feet high rose above a road which was rounded like a garden path. The trees had not been cut or trimmed, each one preserved the magnificent palm-branch shape that makes the Lombard poplar one of the grandest of trees; there they stood, a natural monument which a man might well be proud of having reared. The shadow had already reached one side of the road, transforming it into a vast wall of black leaves, but the setting sun shone full upon the other side, which stood out in contrast, for the young leaves at the tips of every branch had

been dyed a bright golden hue, and, as the breeze stirred through the waving curtain, it gleamed in the light.

"You must be very happy here!" cried Genestas. "The sight of this must be all pleasure to you."

"The love of Nature is the only love that does not deceive human hopes. There is no disappointment here," said the doctor. "Those poplars are ten years old; have you ever seen any that are better grown than these of mine?"

"God is great!" said the soldier, coming to a stand in the middle of the road, of which he saw neither beginning nor end.

"You do me good," cried Benassis. "It was a pleasure to hear you say over again what I have so often said in the midst of this avenue. There is something holy about this place. Here, we are like two mere specks; and the feeling of our own littleness always brings us into the presence of God."

They rode on slowly and in silence, listening to their horses' hoof-beats; the sound echoed along the green corridor as it might have done beneath the vaulted roof of a cathedral.

"How many things have a power to stir us which town-dwellers do not suspect," said the doctor. "Do not notice the sweet scent given off by the gum of the poplar buds, and the resin of the larches? How delightful it is!"

"Listen!" exclaimed Genestas. "Let us wait a moment."

A distant sound of singing came to their ears.

"Is it a woman or a man, or is it a bird?" asked the commandant in a low voice. "Is it the voice of this wonderful landscape!"

"It is something of all these things," the doctor answered, as he dismounted and fastened his horse to a branch of a poplar tree.

He made a sign to the officer to follow his example and to come with him. They went slowly along a footpath between two hedges of blossoming hawthorn which filled the damp evening air with its delicate fragrance. The sun shone full into the pathway; the light and warmth were very percepti-

ble after the shade thrown by the long wall of poplar trees; the still powerful rays poured a flood of red light over a cottage at the end of the stony track. The ridge of the cottage roof was usually a bright green with its overgrowth of mosses and house-leeks, and the thatch was brown as a chestnut shell, but just now it seemed to be powdered with a golden dust. The cottage itself was scarcely visible through the haze of light; the ruinous wall, the doorway and everything about it was radiant with a fleeting glory and a beauty due to chance, such as is sometimes seen for an instant in a human face, beneath the influence of a strong emotion that brings warmth and color into it. In a life under the open sky and among the fields, the transient and tender grace of such moments as these draws from us the wish of the apostle who said to Jesus Christ upon the mountain, "Let us build a tabernacle and dwell here."

The wide landscape seemed at that moment to have found a voice whose purity and sweetness equaled its own sweetness and purity, a voice as mournful as the dying light in the west —for a vague reminder of Death is divinely set in the heavens, and the sun above gives the same warning that is given here on earth by the flowers and the bright insects of the day. There is a tinge of sadness about the radiance of sunset, and the melody was sad. It was a song widely known in days of yore, a ballad of love and sorrow that once had served to stir the national hatred of France for England. Beaumarchais, in a later day, had given it back its true poetry by adapting it for the French theatre and putting it into the mouth of a page, who pours out his heart to his stepmother. Just now it was simply the air that rose and fell. There were no words; the plaintive voice of the singer touched and thrilled the soul.

"It is the swan's song," said Benassis. "That voice does not sound twice in a century for human ears. Let us hurry; we must put a stop to the singing! The child is killing himself; it would be cruel to listen to him any longer. Be quiet, Jacques! Come, come, be quiet!" cried the doctor.

The music ceased. Genestas stood motionless and over-

come with astonishment. A cloud had drifted across the sun, the landscape and the voice were both mute. Shadow, chillness, and silence had taken the place of the soft glory of the light, the warm breath of the breeze, and the child's singing.

"What makes you disobey me?" asked Benassis. "I shall not bring you any more rice pudding nor snail broth! No more fresh dates and white bread for you! So you want to die and break your poor mother's heart, do you?"

Genestas came into a little yard, which was sufficiently clean and tidily kept, and saw before him a lad of fifteen, who looked as delicate as a woman. His hair was fair but scanty, and the color in his face was so bright that it seemed hardly natural. He rose up slowly from the bench where he was sitting, beneath a thick bush of jessamine and some blossoming lilacs that were running riot, so that he was almost hidden among the leaves.

"You know very well," said the doctor, "that I told you not to talk, not to expose yourself to the chilly evening air, and to go to bed as soon as the sun was set. What put it into your head to sing?"

"*Dame!* M. Benassis, it was so very warm out here, and it is so nice to feel warm! I am always cold. I felt so happy that without thinking I began to try over *Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre,* just for fun, and then I began to listen to myself because my voice was something like the sound of the flute your shepherd plays."

"Well, my poor Jacques, this must not happen again; do you hear? Let me have your hand," and the doctor felt his pulse.

The boy's eyes had their usual sweet expression, but just now they shone with a feverish light.

"It is just as I thought, you are covered with perspiration," said Benassis. "Your mother has not come in yet?"

"No, sir."

"Come! go in-doors and get into bed."

The young invalid went back into the cottage, followed by Benassis and the officer.

"Just light a candle, Captain Bluteau," said the doctor, who was helping Jacques to take off his rough, tattered clothing.

When Genestas had struck a light, and the interior of the room was visible, he was surprised by the extreme thinness of the child, who seemed to be little more than skin and bone. When the little peasant had been put to bed, Benassis tapped the lad's chest, and listened to the ominous sounds made in this way by his fingers; then, after some deliberation, he drew back the coverlet over Jacques, stepped back a few paces, folded his arms across his chest, and closely scrutinized his patient.

"How do you feel, my little man?"

"Quite comfortable, sir."

A table, with four spindle legs, stood in the room; the doctor drew it up to the bed, found a tumbler and a phial on the mantel-shelf, and composed a draught, by carefully measuring a few drops of brown liquid from the phial into some water, Genestas holding the light the while.

"Your mother is very late."

"She is coming, sir," said the child; "I can hear her footsteps on the path."

The doctor and the officer looked around them while they waited. At the foot of the bed there was a sort of mattress made of moss, on which, doubtless, the mother was wont to sleep in her clothes, for there were neither sheets nor coverlet. Genestas pointed out this bed to Benassis, who nodded slightly to show that he likewise had already admired this motherly devotion. There was a clatter of sabots in the yard, and the doctor went out.

"You will have to sit up with Jacques to-night, Mother Colas. If he tells you that his breathing is bad, you must let him drink some of the draught that I have poured into the tumbler on the table. Take care not to let him have more than two or three sips at a time; there ought to be enough in the tumbler to last him all through the night. Above all things, do not touch the phial, and change the child's clothing at once. He is perspiring heavily."

"I could not manage to wash his shirts to-day, sir; I had to take the hemp over to Grenoble, as we wanted the money."

"Very well, then, I will send you some shirts."

"Then is he worse, my poor lad?" asked the woman.

"He has been so imprudent as to sing, Mother Colas; and it is not to be expected that any good can come of it; but do not be hard upon him, nor scold him. Do not be down-hearted about it; and if Jacques complains overmuch, send a neighbor to fetch me. Good-bye."

The doctor called to his friend, and they went back along the foot-path.

"Is that little peasant consumptive?" asked Genestas.

"*Mon Dieu!* yes," answered Benassis. "Science cannot save him, unless Nature works a miracle. Our professors at the École de Médecine in Paris often used to speak to us of the phenomenon which you have just witnessed. Some maladies of this kind bring about changes in the voice-producing organs that give the sufferer a short-lived power of song that no trained voice can surpass. I have made you spend a melancholy day, sir," said the doctor when he was once more in the saddle. "Suffering and death everywhere, but everywhere also resignation. All these peasant folk take death philosophically; they fall ill, say nothing about it, and take to their beds like dumb animals. But let us say no more about death, and let us quicken our horses' paces a little; we ought to reach the town before nightfall, so that you may see the new quarter."

"Eh! some place is on fire over there," said Genestas, pointing to a spot on the mountain, where a sheaf of flames was rising.

"It is not a dangerous fire. Our lime-burner is heating his kiln, no doubt. It is a newly-started industry, which turns our heather to account."

There was a sudden report of a gun, followed by an involuntary exclamation from Benassis, who said, with an impatient gesture, "If that is Butifer, we shall see which of us two is the stronger."

"The shot came from that quarter," said Genestas, indicating a beech-wood up above them on the mountain side. "Yes, up there; you may trust an old soldier's ear."

"Let us go there at once!" cried Benassis, and he made straight for the little wood, urging his horse at a furious speed across the ditches and fields, as if he were riding a steeplechase, in his anxiety to catch the sportsman red-handed.

"The man you are after has made off," shouted Genestas, who could scarcely keep up with him.

Benassis wheeled his horse round sharply, and came back again. The man of whom he was in search soon appeared on the top of a perpendicular crag, a hundred feet above the level of the two horsemen.

"Butifer!" shouted Benassis when he saw that this figure carried a fowling-piece; "come down!"

Butifer recognized the doctor, and replied by a respectful and friendly sign which showed that he had every intention of obeying.

"I can imagine that if a man were driven to it by fear or by some overmastering impulse he might possibly contrive to scramble up to that point among the rocks," said Genestas; "but how will he manage to come down again?"

"I have no anxiety on that score," answered Benassis; "the wild goats must feel envious of that fellow yonder! You will see."

The emergencies of warfare had accustomed the commandant to gauge the real worth of men; he admired the wonderful quickness of Butifer's movements, the sure-footed grace with which the hunter swung himself down the rugged sides of the crag, to the top of which he had so boldly climbed. The strong, slender form of the mountaineer was gracefully poised in every attitude which the precipitous nature of the path compelled him to assume; and so certain did he seem of his power to hold on at need, that if the pinnacle of rock on which he took his stand had been a level floor, he could not have set his foot down upon it more calmly. He carried his fowling-

piece as if it had been a light walking-cane. Butifer was a young man of middle height, thin, muscular, and in good training; his beauty was of a masculine order, which impressed Genestas on a closer view.

Evidently he belonged to the class of smugglers who ply their trade without resorting to violent courses, and who only exert patience and craft to defraud the government. His face was manly and sunburned. His eyes, which were bright as an eagle's, were of a clear yellow color, and his sharply-cut nose with its slight curve at the tip was very much like an eagle's beak. His cheeks were covered with down, his red lips were half open, giving a glimpse of a set of teeth of dazzling whiteness. His beard, moustache, and the reddish whiskers, which he allowed to grow, and which curled naturally, still further heightened the masculine and forbidding expression of his face. Everything about him spoke of strength. He was broad-chested; constant activity had made the muscles of his hands curiously firm and prominent. There was the quick intelligence of a savage about his glances; he looked resolute, fearless, and imperturbable, like a man accustomed to put his life in peril, and whose physical and mental strength had been so often tried by dangers of every kind, that he no longer felt any doubts about himself. He wore a blouse that had suffered a good deal from thorns and briars, and he had a pair of leather soles bound to his feet by eelskin thongs, and a pair of torn and tattered blue linen breeches through which his legs were visible, red, wiry, hard, and muscular as those of a stag.

"There you see the man who once fired a shot at me," Benassis remarked to the commandant in a low voice. "If at this moment I were to signify to him my desire to be rid of any one, he would kill them without scruple.—Butifer!" he went on, addressing the poacher, "I fully believed you to be a man of your word; I pledged mine for you because I had your promise. My promise to the *procureur du roi* at Grenoble was based upon your vow never to go poaching again, and to turn over a new leaf and become a steady, industrious

worker. You fired that shot just now, and here you are, on the Comte de Labranchoir's estate! Eh! you miscreant? Suppose his keeper had happened to hear you? It is a lucky thing for you that I shall take no formal cognizance of this offence; if I did, you would come up as an old offender, and of course you have no gun license! I let you keep that gun of yours out of tenderness for your attachment to the weapon."

"It is a beauty," said the commandant, who recognized a duck gun from Saint Étienne.

The smuggler raised his head and looked at Genestas by way of acknowledging the compliment.

"Butifer," continued Benassis, "if your conscience does not reproach you, it ought to do so. If you are going to begin your old tricks again, you will find yourself once more in a park enclosed by four stone walls, and no power on earth will save you from the hulks; you will be a marked man, and your character will be ruined. Bring your gun to me to-night, I will take care of it for you."

Butifer gripped the barrel of his weapon in a convulsive clutch.

"You are quite right, sir," he said; "I have done wrong, I have broken bounds, I am a cur. My gun ought to go to you, but when you take it away from me, you take all that I have in the world. The last shot which my mother's son will fire shall be through my own head. . . . What would you have? I did as you wanted me. I kept quiet all the winter; but the spring came, and the sap rose. I am not used to day labor. It is not in my nature to spend my life in fattening fowls; I cannot stoop about turning over the soil for vegetables, nor flourish a whip and drive a cart, nor scrub down a horse in a stable all my life, so I must die of starvation, I suppose? I am only happy when I am up there," he went on after a pause, pointing to the mountains. "And I have been about among the hills for the past week; I got a sight of a chamois, and I have the chamois there," he said, pointing to the top of the crag; "it is at your service! Dear M. Be-

nassis, leave me my gun. Listen! I will leave the Commune, *foi de Butifer!* I will go to the Alps; the chamois-hunters will not say a word; on the contrary, they will receive me with open arms. I shall come to grief at the bottom of some glacier; but, if I am to speak my mind, I would rather live for a couple of years among the heights, where there are no governments, nor excisemen, nor gamekeepers, nor *procureurs du roi,* than grovel in a marsh for a century. You are the only one that I shall be sorry to leave behind; all the rest of them bore me! When you are in the right, at any rate you don't worry one's life out——"

"And how about Louise?" asked Benassis. Butifer paused and turned thoughtful.

"Eh! learn to read and write, my lad," said Genestas; "come and enlist in my regiment, have a horse to ride, and turn carabineer. If they once sound 'to horse' for something like a war, you will find out that Providence made you to live in the midst of cannon, bullets, and battalions, and they will make a general of you."

"Ye-es, if Napoleon was back again," answered Butifer.

"You know our agreement," said the doctor. "At the second infraction of it, you undertook to go for a soldier. I give you six months in which to learn to read and write, and then I will find up some young gentleman who wants a substitute."

Butifer looked at the mountains.

"Oh! you shall not go to the Alps," cried Benassis. "A man like you, a man of his word, with plenty of good stuff in him, ought to serve his country and command a brigade, and not come to his end trailing after a chamois. The life that you are leading will take you straight to the convict's prison. After over-fatiguing yourself, you are obliged to take a long rest; and, in the end, you will fall into idle ways that will be the ruin of any notions of orderly existence that you have; you will get into the habit of putting your strength to bad uses, and you will take the law into your own hands. I want to put you, in spite of yourself, into the right path."

"So I am to pine and fret myself to death? I feel suffo-

cated whenever I am in a town. I cannot hold out for more that a day, in Grenoble, when I take Louise there——"

"We all have our whims, which we must manage to control, or turn them to account for our neighbor's benefit. But it is late, and I am in a hurry. Come to see me to-morrow, and bring your gun along with you. We will talk this over, my boy. Good-bye. Go and sell your chamois in Grenoble."

The two horsemen went on their way.

"That is what I call a man," said Genestas.

"A man in a bad way," answered Benassis. "But what help is there for it? You heard what he said. Is it not lamentable to see such fine qualities running to waste? If France were invaded by a foreign foe, Butifer at the head of a hundred young fellows would keep a whole division busy in Maurienne for a month; but in a time of peace the only outlets for his energy are those which set the law at defiance. He must wrestle with something; whenever he is not risking his neck he is at odds with society, he lends a helping hand to smugglers. The rogue will cross the Rhone, all by himself, in a little boat, to take shoes over into Savoy; he makes good his retreat, heavy laden as he is, to some inaccessible place high up among the hills, where he stays for two days at a time, living on dry crusts. In short, danger is as welcome to him as sleep would be to anybody else, and by dint of experience he has acquired a relish for extreme sensations that has totally unfitted him for ordinary life. It vexes me that a man like that should take a wrong turn and gradually go to the bad, become a bandit, and die on the gallows. But, see, captain, how our village looks from here!"

Genestas obtained a distant view of a wide circular space, planted with trees, a fountain surrounded by poplars stood in the middle of it. Round the enclosure were high banks on which a triple line of trees of different kinds were growing; the first row consisted of acacias, the second of Japanese varnish trees, and some young elms grew on the highest row of all.

"That is where we hold our fair," said Benassis. "That

is the beginning of the High Street, by those two handsome houses that I told you about; one belongs to the notary, and the other to the justice of the peace."

They came at that moment into a broad road, fairly evenly paved with large cobble-stones. There were altogether about a hundred new houses on either side of it, and almost every house stood in a garden.

The view of the church with its doorway made a pretty termination to this road. Two more roads had been recently planned out half-way down the course of the first, and many new houses had already been built along them. The town-hall stood opposite the parsonage, in the square by the church. As Benassis went down the road, women and children and men who had just finished their day's work promptly stood in their doorways to wish him good-evening, the men took off their caps, and the little children danced and shouted about his horse, as if the animal's good-nature were as well known as the kindness of its master. The gladness was undemonstrative; there was the instinctive delicacy of all deep feeling about it, and it had the same pervasive power. At the sight of this welcome it seemed to Genestas that the doctor had been too modest in his description of the affection with which he was regarded by the people of the district. His truly was a sovereignty of the sweetest kind; a right royal sovereignty moreover, for its title was engraven in the hearts of its subjects. However dazzling the rays of glory that surround a man, however great the power that he enjoys, in his inmost soul he soon comes to a just estimate of the sentiments that all external action causes for him. He very soon sees that no change has been wrought in him, that there is nothing new and nothing greater in the exercise of his physical faculties, and discovers his own real nothingness. Kings, even should they rule over the whole world, are condemned to live in a narrow circle like other men. They must even submit to the conditions of their lot, and their happiness depends upon the personal impressions that they receive. But Benassis met with nothing but goodwill and loyalty throughout the district.

III.

THE NAPOLEON OF THE PEOPLE

"Pray, come in, sir!" cried Jacquotte. "A pretty time the gentlemen have been waiting for you! It is always the way! You always manage to spoil the dinner for me whenever it ought to be particularly good. Everything is cooked to death by this time——"

"Oh! well, here we are," answered Benassis with a smile.

The two horsemen dismounted, and went off to the salon, where the guests invited by the doctor were assembled.

"Gentlemen," he said, taking Genestas by the hand, "I have the honor of introducing to you M. Bluteau, captain of a regiment of cavalry stationed at Grenoble—an old soldier, who has promised me that he will stay among us for a little while."

Then, turning to Genestas, he presented to him a tall, thin, gray-haired man, dressed in black.

"This gentleman," said Benassis, "is M. Dufau, the justice of the peace of whom I have already spoken to you, and who has so largely contributed to the prosperity of the Commune." Then he led his guest up to a pale, slight young man of middle height, who wore spectacles, and was also dressed in black. "And this is M. Tonnelet," he went on, "M. Gravier's son-in-law, and the first notary who came to the village."

The doctor next turned to a stout man, who seemed to belong half to the peasant, half to the middle class, the owner of a rough-pimpled but good-humored countenance.

"This is my worthy colleague M. Cambon," he went on, "the timber-merchant, to whom I owe the confidence and good-will of the people here. He was one of the promoters of the road which you have admired. I have no need to tell you

the profession of this gentleman," Benassis added, turning to the curate. "Here is a man whom no one can help loving."

There was an irresistible attraction in the moral beauty expressed by the curé's countenance, which engrossed Genestas' attention. Yet a certain harshness and austerity of outline might make M. Janvier's face seem unpleasing at a first glance. His attitude, and his slight, emaciated frame, showed that he was far from strong physically, but the unchanging serenity of his face bore witness to the profound inward peace of the Christian and to the strength that comes from purity of heart. Heaven seemed to be reflected in his eyes, and the inextinguishable fervor of charity which glowed in his heart appeared to shine from them. The gestures that he made but rarely were simple and natural, his appeared to be a quiet and retiring nature, and there was a modesty and simplicity like that of a young girl about his actions. At first sight he inspired respect and a vague desire to be admitted to his friendship.

"Ah! M. le Maire," he said, bending as though to escape from Benassis' eulogium.

Something in the curé's tones brought a thrill to Genestas' heart, and the two insignificant words uttered by this stranger priest plunged him into musings that were almost devout.

"Gentlemen," said Jacquotte, who came into the middle of the room, and there took her stand, with her hands on her hips, "the soup is on the table."

Invited by Benassis, who summoned each in turn so as to avoid questions of precedence, the doctor's five guests went into the dining-room; and after the curé, in low and quiet tones, had repeated a *Benedicite,* they took their places at table. The cloth that covered the table was of that peculiar kind of damask linen invented in the time of Henri IV. by the brothers Graindorge, the skilful weavers, who gave their name to the heavy fabric so well known to housekeepers. The linen was of dazzling whiteness, and fragrant with the scent of the thyme that Jacquotte always put into her wash-tubs. The dinner service was of white porcelain, edged with blue,

and was in perfect order. The decanters were of the old-fashioned octagonal kind still in use in the provinces, though they have disappeared elsewhere. Grotesque figures had been carved on the horn handles of the knives. These relics of ancient splendor, which, nevertheless, looked almost new, seemed to those who scrutinized them to be in keeping with the kindly and open-hearted nature of the master of the house.

The lid of the soup-tureen drew a momentary glance from Genestas; he noticed that it was surmounted by a group of vegetables in high relief, skilfully colored after the manner of Bernard Palissy, the celebrated sixteenth century craftsman.

There was no lack of character about the group of men thus assembled. The powerful heads of Genestas and Benassis contrasted admirable with M. Janvier's apostolic countenance; and in the same fashion the elderly faces of the justice of the peace and the deputy-mayor brought out the youthfulness of the notary. Society seemed to be represented by these various types. The expression of each one indicated contentment with himself and with the present, and a faith in the future. M. Tonnelet and M. Janvier, who were still young, loved to make forecasts of coming events, for they felt that the future was theirs; while the other guests were fain rather to turn their talk upon the past. All of them faced the things of life seriously, and their opinions seemed to reflect a double tinge of soberness, on the one hand, from the twilight hues of well-nigh forgotten joys that could never more be revived for them; and, on the other, from the gray dawn which gave promise of a glorious day.

"You must have had a very tiring day, sir?" said M. Cambon, addressing the curé.

"Yes, sir," answered M. Janvier, "the poor crétin and Père Pelletier were buried at different hours."

"Now we can pull down all the hovels of the old village," Benassis remarked to his deputy. "When the space on which the houses stand has been grubbed up, it will mean at least another acre of meadow land for us; and furthermore, there

will be a clear saving to the Commune of the hundred francs that it used to cost to keep Chautard the crétin."

"For the next three years we ought to lay out the hundred francs in making a single-span bridge to carry the lower road over the main stream," said M. Cambon. "The townsfolk and the people down the valley have fallen into the way of taking a short cut across that patch of land of Jean François Pastoureau's; before they have done they will cut it up in a way that will do a lot of harm to that poor fellow."

"I am sure that the money could not be put to a better use," said the justice of the peace. "In my opinion the abuse of the right of way is one of the worst nuisances in a country district. One-tenth of the cases that come before the court are caused by unfair easements. The rights of property are infringed in this way almost with impunity in many and many a commune. A respect for law and a respect for property are ideas too often disregarded in France, and it is most important that they should be inculcated. Many people think that there is something dishonorable in assisting the law to take its course. 'Go and be hanged somewhere else,' is a saying which seems to be dictated by an unpraiseworthy generosity of feeling; but at bottom it is nothing but a hypocritical formula—a sort of veil which we throw over our own selfishness. Let us own to it, we lack patriotism! The true patriot is the citizen who is so deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the laws that he will see them carried out even at his own cost and inconvenience. If you let the criminal go in peace, are you not making yourself answerable for the crimes he will commit?"

"It is all of a piece," said Benassis. "If the mayors kept their roads in better order, there would not be so many footpaths. And if the members of Municipal Councils knew a little better, they would uphold the small landowner and the mayor when the two combine to oppose the establishment of unfair easements. The fact that château, cottage, field, and tree are all equally sacred would then be brought home in every way to the ignorant; they would be made to understand

that Right is just the same in all cases, whether the value of the property in question be large or small. But such salutary changes cannot be brought about all at once. They depend almost entirely on the moral condition of the population, which we can never completely reform without the potent aid of the curés. This remark does not apply to you in any way, M. Janvier."

"Nor do I take it to myself," laughed the curé. "Is not my heart set on bringing the teaching of the Catholic religion to co-operate with your plans of administration? For instance, I have often tried, in my pulpit discourses on theft, to imbue the folk of this parish with the very ideas of Right to which you have just given utterance. For truly, God does not estimate theft by the value of the thing stolen, He looks at the thief. That has been the gist of the parables which I have tried to adapt to the comprehension of my parishioners."

"You have succeeded, sir," said Cambon. "I know the change you have brought about in people's ways of looking at things, for I can compare the Commune as it is now with the Commune as it used to be. There are certainly very few places where the laborers are as careful as ours are about keeping the time in their working hours. The cattle are well looked after; any damage that they do is done by accident. There is no pilfering in the woods, and finally you have made our peasants clearly understand that the leisure of the rich is the reward of a thrifty and hard-working life."

"Well, then," said Genestas, "you ought to be pretty well pleased with your infantry, M. le Curé."

"We cannot expect to find angels anywhere here below, captain," answered the priest. "Wherever there is poverty, there is suffering too; and suffering and poverty are strong compelling forces which have their abuses, just as power has. When the peasants have a couple of leagues to walk to their work, and have to tramp back wearily in the evening, they perhaps see sportsmen taking short cuts over ploughed land and pasture so as to be back to dinner a little sooner, and is it to be supposed that they will hesitate to follow the example?

And of those who in this way beat out a footpath such as these gentlemen have just been complaining about, which are the real offenders, the workers or the people who are simply amusing themselves? Both the rich and the poor give us a great deal of trouble in these days. Faith, like power, ought always to descend from the heights above us, in heaven or on earth; and certainly in our times the upper classes have less faith in them than the mass of the people, who have God's promise of heaven hereafter as a reward for evils patiently endured. With due submission to ecclesiastical discipline, and deference to the views of my superiors, I think that for some time to come we should be less exacting as to questions of doctrine, and rather endeavor to revive the sentiment of religion in the hearts of the intermediary classes, who debate over the maxims of Christianity instead of putting them in practice. The philosophism of the rich has set a fatal example to the poor, and has brought about intervals of too long duration when men have faltered in their allegiance to God. Such ascendency as we have over our flocks to-day depends entirely on our personal influence with them; is it not deplorable that the existence of religious belief in a commune should be dependent on the esteem in which a single man is held? When the preservative force of Christianity permeating all classes of society shall have put life into the new order of things, there will be an end of sterile disputes about doctrine. The cult of a religion is its form; societies only exist by forms. You have your standard, we have the cross——"

"I should very much like to know, sir," said Genestas, breaking in upon M. Janvier, "why you forbid these poor folk to dance on Sunday?"

"We do not quarrel with dancing in itself, captain; it is forbidden because it leads to immorality, which troubles the peace of the countryside and corrupts its manners. Does not the attempt to purify the spirit of the family and to maintain the sanctity of family ties strike at the root of the evil?"

"Some irregularities are always to be found in every district I know," said M. Tonnelet, "but they very seldom occur

among us. Perhaps there are peasants who remove their neighbor's landmark without much scruple; or they may cut a few osiers that belong to some one else, if they happen to want some; but these are mere peccadilloes compared with the wrongdoing that goes on among a town population. Moreover, the people in this valley seem to me to be devoutly religious."

"Devout?" queried the curé with a smile; "there is no fear of fanaticism here."

"But," objected Cambon, "if the people all went to mass every morning, sir, and to confession every week, how would the fields be cultivated? And three priests would hardly be enough."

"Work is prayer," said the curé. "Doing one's duty brings a knowledge of the religious principles which are a vital necessity to society."

"How about patriotism?" asked Genestas.

"Patriotism can only inspire a short-lived enthusiasm," the curate answered gravely; "religion gives it permanence. Patriotism consists in a brief impulse of forgetfulness of self and self-interest, while Christianity is a complete system of opposition to the depraved tendencies of mankind."

"And yet, during the wars undertaken by the Revolution, patriotism——"

"Yes, we worked wonders at the time of the Revolution," said Benassis, interrupting Genestas; "but only twenty years later, in 1814, our patriotism was extinct; while, in former times, a religious impulse moved France and Europe to fling themselves upon Asia a dozen times in the course of a century."

"Maybe it is easier for two nations to come to terms when the strife has arisen out of some question of material interests," said the justice of the peace; "while wars undertaken with the idea of supporting dogmas are bound to be interminable, because the object can never be clearly defined."

"Well, sir, you are not helping any one to fish!" put in Jacquotte, who had removed the soup with Nicolle's assist-

ance. Faithful to her custom, Jacquotte herself always brought in every dish one after another, a plan which had its drawbacks, for it compelled gluttonous folk to over-eat themselves, and the more abstemious, having satisfied their hunger at an early stage, were obliged to leave the best part of the dinner untouched.

"Gentlemen," said the curé, with a glance at the justice of the peace, "how can you allege that religious wars have had no definite aim? Religion in olden times was such a powerful binding force, that material interests and religious questions were inseparable. Every soldier, therefore, knew quite well what he was fighting for."

"If there has been so much fighting about religion," said Genestas, "God must have built up the system very perfunctorily. Should not a divine institution impress men at once by the truth that is in it?"

All the guests looked at the curé.

"Gentlemen," said M. Janvier, "religion is something that is felt and that cannot be defined. We cannot know the purpose of the Almighty; we are no judges of the means He employs."

"Then, according to you, we are to believe in all your rigmaroles," said Genestas, with the easy good-humor of a soldier who has never given a thought to these things.

"The Catholic religion, better than any other, resolves men's doubts and fears; but even were it otherwise, I might ask you if you run any risks by believing in its truths."

"None worth speaking of," answered Genestas.

"Good! and what risks do you not run by not believing? But let us talk of the worldly aspect of the matter, which most appeals to you. The finger of God is visible in human affairs; see how He directs them by the hand of His vicar on earth. How much men have lost by leaving the path traced out for them by Christianity! So few think of reading Church history, that erroneous notions deliberately sown among the people lead them to condemn the Church; yet the Church has been a pattern of perfect government such as

men seek to establish to-day. The principle of election made it for a long while a great political power. Except the Catholic Church, there was no single religious institution which was founded upon liberty and equality. Everything was ordered to this end. The father-superior, the abbot, the bishop, the general of an order, and the pope were then chosen conscientiously for their fitness for the requirements of the Church. They were the expression of its intelligence, of the thinking power of the Church, and blind obedience was therefore their due. I will say nothing of the ways in which society has benefited by that power which has created modern nations and has inspired so many poems, so much music, so many cathedrals, statues, and pictures. I will simply call your attention to the fact that your modern systems of popular election, of two chambers, and of juries all had their origin in provincial and œcumenical councils, and in the episcopate and college of cardinals; but there is this difference,—the views of civilization held by our present-day philosophy seem to me to fade away before the sublime and divine conception of Catholic communion, the type of a universal social communion brought about by the word and the fact that are combined in religious dogma. It would be very difficult for any modern political system, however perfect people may think it, to work once more such miracles as were wrought in those ages when the Church was the stay and support of the human intellect."

"Why?" asked Genestas.

"Because, in the first place, if the principle of election is to be the basis of a system, absolute equality among the electors is a first requirement; they ought to be 'equal quantities,' to make use of a mathematical term, and that is a state of things which modern politics will never bring about. Then, great social changes can only be effected by means of some common sentiment so powerful that it brings men into concerted action, while latter-day philosophism has discovered that law is based upon personal interest, which keeps men apart. Men full of the generous spirit that watches with

tender care over the trampled rights of the suffering poor, were more often found among the nations of past ages than in our generation. The priesthood, also, which sprang from the middle classes, resisted material forces and stood between the people and their enemies. But the territorial possessions of the Church and her temporal power, which seemingly made her position yet stronger, ended by crippling and weakening her action. As a matter of fact, if the priest has possessions and privileges, he at once appears in the light of an oppressor. He is paid by the State, therefore he is an official: if he gives his time, his life, his whole heart, this is a matter of course, and nothing more than he ought to do; the citizens expect and demand his devotion; and the spontaneous kindliness of his nature is dried up. But, let the priest be vowed to poverty, let him turn to his calling of his own free will, let him stay himself on God alone, and have no resource on earth but the hearts of the faithful, and he becomes once more the missionary of America, he takes the rank of an apostle, he has all things under his feet. Indeed, the burden of wealth drags him down, and it is only by renouncing everything that he gains dominion over all men's hearts."

M. Janvier had compelled the attention of every one present. No one spoke; for all the guests were thoughtful. It was something new to hear such words as these in the mouth of a simple curé.

"There is one serious error, M. Janvier, among the truths to which you have given expression," said Benassis. "As you know, I do not like to raise discussions on points of general interest which modern authorities and modern writers have called in question. In my opinion, a man who has thought out a political system, and who is conscious that he has within him the power of applying it in practical politics, should keep his mind to himself, seize his opportunity and act; but if he dwells in peaceful obscurity as a simple citizen, is it not sheer lunacy to think to bring the great mass over to his opinion by means of individual discussions? For all that, I am about to argue with you, my dear pastor, for I am speaking before

sensible men, each of whom is accustomed always to bring his individual light to a common search for the truth. My ideas may seem strange to you, but they are the outcome of much thought caused by the calamities of the last forty years. Universal suffrage, which finds such favor in the sight of those persons who belong to the constitutional opposition, as it is called, was a capital institution in the Church, because (as you yourself have just pointed out, dear pastor) the individuals of whom the Church was composed were all well educated, disciplined by religious feeling, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the same system, well aware of what they wanted and whither they were going. But modern Liberalism rashly made war upon the prosperous government of the Bourbons, by means of ideas which, should they triumph, would be the ruin of France and of the Liberals themselves. This is well known to the leaders of the Left, who are merely endeavoring to get the power into their own hands. If (which Heaven forbid) the middle classes ranged under the banner of the opposition should succeed in overthrowing those social superiorities which are so repugnant to their vanity, another struggle would follow hard upon their victory. It would not be very long before the middle classes in their turn would be looked upon by the people as a sort of *noblesse;* they would be a sorry kind of *noblesse,* it is true, but their wealth and privileges would seem so much the more hateful in the eyes of the people because they would have a closer vision of these things. I do not say that the nation would come to grief in the struggle, but society would perish anew; for the day of triumph of a suffering people is always brief, and involves disorders of the worst kind. There would be no truce in a desperate strife arising out of an inherent or acquired difference of opinion among the electors. The less enlightened and more numerous portion would sweep away social inequalities, thanks to a system in which votes are reckoned by count and not by weight. Hence it follows that a government is never more strongly organized, and as a consequence is never more perfect than when it has been established for the protection

of Privilege of the most restricted kind. By Privilege I do not at this moment mean the old abuses by which certain rights were conceded to a few, to the prejudice of the many; no, I am using it to express the social circle of the governing class. The governing class is in some sort the heart of the State. But throughout creation Nature has confined the vital principle within a narrow space, in order to concentrate its power; and so it is with the body politic. I will illustrate this thought of mine by examples. Let us suppose that there are a hundred peers in France, there are only one hundred causes of offence. Abolish the peerage, and all wealthy people will constitute the privileged class; instead of a hundred, you will have ten thousand, instead of removing class distinctions, you have merely widened the mischief. In fact, from the people's point of view, the right to live without working is in itself a privilege. The unproductive consumer is a robber in their eyes. The only work that they understand has palpable results; they set no value on intellectual labor—the kind of labor which is the principal source of wealth to them. So by multiplying causes of offence in this way, you extend the field of battle; the social war would be waged on all points instead of being confined within a limited circle; and when attack and resistance become general, the ruin of a country is imminent. Because the rich will always be fewer in number, the victory will be to the poor as soon as it comes to actual fighting. I will throw the burden of proof on history.

"The institution of Senatorial Privilege enabled the Roman Republic to conquer the world. The Senate preserved the tradition of authority. But when the *equites* and the *novi homines* had extended the governing class by adding to the numbers of the Patricians, the State came to ruin. In spite of Sylla, and after the time of Julius Cæsar, Tiberius raised it into the Roman Empire; the system was embodied in one man, and all authority was centered in him, a measure which prolonged the magnificent sway of the Roman for several centuries. The Emperor had ceased to dwell in Rome when the Eternal City fell into the hands of barbarians. When the

conqueror invaded our country, the Franks who divided the land among themselves invented feudal privilege as a safeguard for property. The hundred or the thousand chiefs who owned the country, established their institutions with a view to defending the rights gained by conquest. The duration of the feudal system was co-existent with the restriction of Privilege. But when the *leudes* (an exact translation of the word *gentlemen*) from five hundred became fifty thousand, there came a revolution. The governing power was too widely diffused; it lacked force and concentration; and they had not reckoned with the two powers, Money and Thought, that had set those free who had been beneath their rule. So the victory over the monarchical system, obtained by the middle classes with a view to extending the number of the privileged class, will produce its natural effect—the people will triumph in turn over the middle classes. If this trouble comes to pass, the indiscriminate right of suffrage bestowed upon the masses will be a dangerous weapon in their hands. The man who votes, criticises. An authority that is called in question is no longer an authority. Can you imagine a society without a governing authority? No, you cannot. Therefore, authority means force, and a basis of just judgment should underlie force. Such are the reasons which have led me to think that the principle of popular election is a most fatal one for modern governments. I think that my attachment to the poor and suffering classes has been sufficiently proved, and that no one will accuse me of bearing any ill-will towards them; but though I admire the sublime patience and resignation with which they tread the path of toil, I must pronounce them to be unfit to take part in the government. The proletariat seem to me to be the minors of a nation, and ought to remain in a condition of tutelage. Therefore, gentlemen, the word *election,* to my thinking, is in a fair way to cause as much mischief as the words *conscience* and *liberty,* which, ill-defined and ill-understood, were flung broadcast among the people, to serve as watchwords of revolt and incitements to destruction. It seems to me to be a right and necessary thing

that the masses should be kept in tutelage for the good of society."

"This system of yours runs so clean contrary to everybody's notions nowadays, that we have some right to ask your reasons for it," said Genestas, interrupting the doctor.

"By all means, captain."

"What is this the master is saying?" cried Jacquotte, as she went back to her kitchen. "There he is, the poor dear man, and what is he doing but advising them to crush the people! And they are listening to him——"

"I would never have believed it of M. Benassis," answered Nicolle.

"If I require that the ignorant masses should be governed by a strong hand," the doctor resumed, after a brief pause, "I should desire at the same time that the framework of the social system should be sufficiently yielding and elastic to allow those who have the will and are conscious of their ability to emerge from the crowd, to rise and take their place among the privileged classes. The aim of power of every kind is its own preservation. In order to live, a government, to-day as in the past, must press the strong men of the nation into its service, taking them from every quarter, so as to make them its defenders, and to remove from among the people the men of energy who incite the masses to insurrection. By opening out in this way to the public ambition paths that are at once difficult and easy, easy for strong wills, difficult for weak or imperfect ones, a State averts the perils of the revolutions caused by the struggles of men of superior powers to rise to their proper level. Our long agony of forty years should have made it clear to any man who has brains that social superiorities are a natural outcome of the order of things. They are of three kinds that cannot be questioned—the superiority of the thinker, the superiority of the politician, the superiority of wealth. Is not that as much as to say, genius, power, and money, or, in yet other words—the cause, the means, and the effect? But suppose a kind of social *tabula rasa,* every social unit perfectly equal, an increase of popula-

tion everywhere in the same ratio, and give the same amount of land to each family; it would not be long before you would again have all the existing inequalities of fortune; it is glaringly evident, therefore, that there are such things as superiority of fortune, of thinking capacity, and of power, and we must make up our minds to this fact; but the masses will always regard rights that have been most honestly acquired as privileges, and as a wrong done to themselves.

"The *Social Contract* founded upon this basis will be a perpetual pact between those who have and those who have not. And acting on these principles, those who benefit by the laws will be the lawmakers, for they necessarily have the instinct of self-preservation, and foresee their dangers. It is even more to their interest than to the interest of the masses themselves that the latter should be quiet and contented. The happiness of the people should be ready made for the people. If you look at society as a whole from this point of view, you will soon see, as I do, that the privilege of election ought only to be exercised by men who possess wealth, power, or intelligence, and you will likewise see that the action of the deputies they may choose to represent them should be considerably restricted.

"The maker of laws, gentlemen, should be in advance of his age. It is his business to ascertain the tendency of erroneous notions popularly held, to see the exact direction in which the ideas of a nation are tending; he labors for the future rather than for the present, and for the rising generation rather than for the one that is passing away. But if you call in the masses to make the laws, can they rise above their own level? Nay. The more faithfully an assembly represents the opinions held by the crowd, the less it will know about government, the less lofty its ideas will be, and the more vague and vacillating its policy, for the crowd is and always will be simply a crowd, and this especially with us in France. Law involves submission to regulations; man is naturally opposed to rules and regulations of all kinds, especially if they interfere with his interests; so is it likely

that the masses will enact laws that are contrary to their own inclinations? No.

"Very often legislation ought to run counter to the prevailing tendencies of the time. If the law is to be shaped by the prevailing habits of thought and tendencies of a nation, would not that mean that in Spain a direct encouragement would be given to idleness and religious intolerance; in England, to the commercial spirit; in Italy, to the love of the arts that may be the expression of a society, but by which no society can entirely exist; in Germany, feudal class distinctions would be fostered; and here, in France, popular legislation would promote the spirit of frivolity, the sudden craze for an idea, and the readiness to split into factions which has always been our bane.

"What has happened in the forty years since the electors took it upon themselves to make laws for France? We have something like forty thousand laws! A people with forty thousand laws might as well have none at all. Is it likely that five hundred mediocrities (for there are never more than a hundred great minds to do the work of any one century), is it likely that five hundred mediocrities will have the wit to rise to the level of these considerations? Not they! Here is a constant stream of men poured forth from five hundred different places; they will interpret the spirit of the law in divers manners, and there should be a unity of conception in the law.

"But I will go yet further. Sooner or later an assembly of this kind comes to be swayed by one man, and instead of a dynasty of kings, you have a constantly changing and costly succession of prime ministers. There comes a Mirabeau, or a Danton, a Robespierre, or a Napoleon, or proconsuls, or an emperor, and there is an end of deliberations and debates. In fact, it takes a determinate amount of force to raise a given weight; the force may be distributed, and you may have a less or greater number of levers, but it comes to the same thing in the end, the force must be in proportion to the weight. The weight in this case is the ignorant and suffering

mass of people who form the lowest stratum of society. The attitude of authority is bound to be repressive, and great concentration of the governing power is needed to neutralize the force of a popular movement. This is the application of the principle that I unfolded when I spoke just now of the way in which the class privileged to govern should be restricted. If this class is composed of men of ability, they will obey this natural law, and compel the country to obey. If you collect a crowd of mediocrities together, sooner or later they will fall under the dominion of a stronger head. A deputy of talent understands the reasons for which a government exists; the mediocre deputy simply comes to terms with force. An assembly either obeys an idea, like the Convention in the time of the Terror; a powerful personality, like the Corps Legislatif under the rule of Napoleon; or falls under the domination of a system or of wealth, as it has done in our own day. The Republican Assembly, that dream of some innocent souls, is an impossibility. Those who would fain bring it to pass are either grossly deluded dupes or would-be tyrants. Do you not think that there is something ludicrous about an Assembly which gravely sits in debate upon the perils of a nation which ought to be roused into immediate action? It is only right of course that the people should elect a body of representatives who will decide questions of supplies and of taxation; this institution has always existed, under the sway of the most tyrannous ruler no less than under the sceptre of the mildest of princes. Money is not to be taken by force; there are natural limits to taxation, and if they are overstepped, a nation either rises up in revolt, or lays itself down to die. Again, if this elective body, changing from time to time according to the needs and ideas of those whom it represents, should refuse obedience to a bad law in the name of the people, well and good. But to imagine that five hundred men, drawn from every corner of the kingdom, will make a good law! Is it not a dreary joke, for which the people will sooner or later have to pay? They have a change of masters. that is all.

"Authority ought to be given to one man, he alone should have the task of making the laws; and he should be a man who, by force of circumstances, is continually obliged to submit his actions to general approbation. But the only restraints that can be brought to bear upon the exercise of power, be it the power of the one, of the many, or of the multitude, are to be found in the religious institutions of a country. Religion forms the only adequate safeguard against the abuse of supreme power. When a nation ceases to believe in religion, it becomes ungovernable in consequence, and its prince perforce becomes a tyrant. The Chambers that occupy an intermediate place between rulers and their subjects are powerless to prevent these results, and can only mitigate them to a very slight extent; Assemblies, as I have said before, are bound to become the accomplices of tyranny on the one hand, or of insurrection on the other. My own leanings are towards a government by one man; but though it is good, it cannot be absolutely good, for the results of every policy will always depend upon the condition and the belief of the nation. If a nation is in its dotage, if it has been corrupted to the core by philosophism and the spirit of discussion, it is on the highroad to despotism, from which no form of free government will save it. And, at the same time, a righteous people will nearly always find liberty even under a despotic rule. All this goes to show the necessity for restricting the right of election within very narrow limits, the necessity for a strong government, the necessity for a powerful religion which makes the rich man the friend of the poor, and enjoins upon the poor an absolute submission to their lot. It is, in fact, really imperative that the Assemblies should be deprived of all direct legislative power, and should confine themselves to the registration of laws and to questions of taxation.

"I know that different ideas from these exist in many minds. To-day, as in past ages, there are enthusiasts who seek for perfection, and who would like to have society better ordered than it is at present. But innovations which tend to bring about a kind of social topsy-turvydom, ought only to be

undertaken by general consent. Let the innovators have patience. When I remember how long it has taken Christianity to establish itself; how many centuries it has taken to bring about a purely moral revolution which surely ought to have been accomplished peacefully, the thought of the horrors of a revolution, in which material interests are concerned, makes me shudder, and I am for maintaining existing institutions. 'Each shall have his own thought,' is the dictum of Christianity; 'Each man shall have his own field,' says modern law; and in this, modern law is in harmony with Christianity. Each shall have his own thought; that is a consecration of the rights of intelligence; and each shall have his own field, is a consecration of the right to property that has been acquired by toil. Hence our society. Nature has based human life upon the instinct of self-preservation, and social life is founded upon personal interest. Such ideas as these are, to my thinking, the very rudiments of politics. Religion keeps these two selfish sentiments in subordination by the thought of a future life; and in this way the harshness of the conflict of interests has been somewhat softened. God has mitigated the sufferings that arise from social friction by a religious sentiment which raises self-forgetfulness into a virtue; just as He has moderated the friction of the mechanism of the universe by laws which we do not know. Christianity bids the poor bear patiently with the rich, and commands the rich to lighten the burdens of the poor; these few words, to my mind, contain the essence of all laws, human and divine!"

"I am no statesman," said the notary; "I see in a ruler a liquidator of society which should always remain in liquidation; he should hand over to his successor the exact value of the assets which he received."

"I am no statesman either," said Benassis, hastily interrupting the notary. "It takes nothing but a little common sense to better the lot of a commune, of a canton, or of an even wider district; a department calls for some administrative talent, but all these four spheres of action are compara-

tively limited, the outlook is not too wide for ordinary powers of vision, and there is a visible connection between their interests and the general progress made by the State.

"But in yet higher regions, everything is on a larger scale, the horizon widens, and from the standpoint where he is placed, the statesman ought to grasp the whole situation. It is only necessary to consider liabilities due ten years hence, in order to bring about a great deal of good in the case of the department, the district, the canton, or the commune; but when it is a question of the destinies of a nation, a statesman must foresee a more distant future and the course that events are likely to take for the next hundred years. The genius of a Colbert or of a Sully avails nothing, unless it is supported by the energetic will that makes a Napoleon or a Cromwell. A great minister, gentlemen, is a great thought written at large over all the years of a century of prosperity and splendor for which he has prepared the way. Steadfast perseverance is the virtue of which he stands most in need; and in all human affairs does not steadfast perseverance indicate a power of the very highest order? We have had for some time past too many men who think only of the ministry instead of the nation, so that we cannot but admire the real statesman as the vastest human Poetry. Ever to look beyond the present moment, to foresee the ways of Destiny, to care so little for power that he only retains it because he is conscious of his usefulness, while he does not overestimate his strength; ever to lay aside all personal feeling and low ambitions, so that he may always be master of his faculties, and foresee, will, and act without ceasing; to compel himself to be just and impartial, to keep order on a large scale, to silence his heart that he may be guided by his intellect alone, to be neither apprehensive nor sanguine, neither suspicious nor confiding, neither grateful nor ungrateful, never to be unprepared for an event, nor taken at unawares by an idea; to live, in fact, with the requirements of the masses ever in his mind, to spread the protecting wings of his thought above them, to sway them by the thunder of his voice and the keenness of his glance;

seeing all the while not the details of affairs, but the great issues at stake, is not that to be something more than a mere man? Therefore the names of the great and noble fathers of nations cannot but be household words for ever."

There was silence for a moment, during which the guests looked at one another.

"Gentlemen, you have not said a word about the army!" cried Genestas. "A military organization seems to me to be the real type on which all good civil society should be modeled; the Sword is the guardian of a nation."

The justice of the peace laughed softly.

"Captain," he said, "an old lawyer once said that empires began with the sword and ended with the desk; we have reached the desk stage by this time."

"And now that we have settled the fate of the world, gentlemen, let us change the subject. Come, captain, a glass of Hermitage," cried the doctor, laughing.

"Two, rather than one," said Genestas, holding out his glass. "I mean to drink them both to your health—to a man who does honor to the species."

"And who is dear to all of us," said the curé in gentle tones.

"Do you mean to force me into the sin of pride, M. Janvier?"

"M. le Curé has only said in a low voice what all the canton says aloud," said Cambon.

"Gentlemen, I propose that we take a walk to the parsonage by moonlight, and see M. Janvier home."

"Let us start," said the guests, and they prepared to accompany the curé.

"Shall we go to the barn?" said the doctor, laying a hand on Genestas' arm. They had taken leave of the curé and the other guests. "You will hear them talking about Napoleon, Captain Bluteau. Goguelat, the postman, is there, and there are several of his cronies who are sure to draw him out on the subject of the idol of the people. Nicolle, my stableman, has set a ladder so that we can climb up on to the hay; there is a place from which we can look down on the whole scene.

Come along, an up-sitting is something worth seeing, believe me. It will not be the first time that I have hidden in the hay to overhear a soldier's tales or the stories that peasants tell among themselves. We must be careful to keep out of sight though, as these good folk turn shy and put on company manners as soon as they see a stranger."

"Eh! my dear sir," said Genestas, "have I not often pretended to be asleep so as to hear my troopers talking out on bivouac? My word, I once heard a droll yarn reeled off by an old quartermaster for some conscripts who were afraid of war; I never laughed so heartily in any theatre in Paris. He was telling them about the Retreat from Moscow, he told them that the army had nothing but the clothes they stood up in, that their wine was iced, that the dead stood stock-still in the road just where they were, that they had seen White Russia, and that they currycombed the horses there with their teeth, that those who were fond of skating had fine times of it, and people who had a fancy for savory ices had as much as they could put away, that the women were generally poor company, but that the only thing they could really complain of was the want of hot water for shaving. In fact, he told them such a pack of absurdities, that even an old quartermaster who had lost his nose with a frost-bite, so that they had dubbed him *Nezrestant,* was fain to laugh."

"Hush!" said Benassis, "here we are. I will go first; follow after me."

Both of them scaled the ladder and hid themselves in the hay, in a place from whence they could have a good view of the party below, who had not heard a sound overhead. Little groups of women were clustered about three or four candles. Some of them sewed, others were spinning, a good few of them were doing nothing, and sat with their heads strained forward, and their eyes fixed on an old peasant who was telling a story. The men were standing about for the most part, or lying at full length on the trusses of hay. Every group was absolutely silent. Their faces were barely visible by the flickering gleams of the candles by which the women

were working, although each candle was surrounded by a glass globe filled with water, in order to concentrate the light. The thick darkness and shadow that filled the roof and all the upper part of the barn seemed still further to diminish the light that fell here and there upon the workers' heads with such picturesque effects of light and shade. Here, it shone full upon the bright wondering eyes and brown forehead of a little peasant maiden; and there the straggling beams brought out the outlines of the rugged brows of some of the older men, throwing up their figures in sharp relief against the dark background, and giving a fantastic appearance to their worn and weather-stained garb. The attentive attitude of all these people and the expression on all their faces showed that they had given themselves up entirely to the pleasure of listening, and that the narrator's sway was absolute. It was a curious scene. The immense influence that poetry exerts over every mind was plainly to be seen. For is not the peasant who demands that the tale of wonder should be simple, and that the impossible should be well-nigh credible, a lover of poetry of the purest kind?

"She did not like the look of the house at all," the peasant was saying as the two newcomers took their places where they could overhear him; "but the poor little hunchback was so tired out with carrying her bundle of hemp to market, that she went in; besides, the night had come, and she could go no further. She only asked to be allowed to sleep there, and ate nothing but a crust of bread that she took from her wallet. And inasmuch as the woman who kept house for the brigands knew nothing about what they had planned to do that night, she let the old woman into the house, and sent her upstairs without a light. Our hunchback throws herself down on a rickety truckle bed, says her prayers, thinks about her hemp, and is dropping off to sleep. But before she is fairly asleep, she hears a noise, and in walk two men carrying a lantern, and each man had a knife in his hand. Then fear came upon her; for in those times, look you, they used to make pâtés of human flesh for the seigneurs, who were very fond of them.

But the old woman plucked up heart again, for she was so thoroughly shriveled and wrinkled that she thought they would think her a poorish sort of diet. The two men went past the hunchback and walked up to a bed that there was in the great room, and in which they had put the gentleman with the big portmanteau, the one that passed for a *negromancer*. The taller man holds up the lantern and takes the gentleman by the feet, and the short one, that had pretended to be drunk, clutches hold of his head and cuts his throat, clean, with one stroke, swish! Then they leave the head and body lying in its own blood up there, steal the portmanteau, and go downstairs with it. Here is our woman in a nice fix! First of all she thinks of slipping out, before any one can suspect it, not knowing that Providence had brought her there to glorify God and to bring down punishment on the murderers. She was in a great fright, and when one is frightened one thinks of nothing else. But the woman of the house had asked the two brigands about the hunchback, and that had alarmed them. So back they come, creeping softly up the wooden staircase. The poor hunchback curls up in a ball with fright, and she hears them talking about her in whispers.

" 'Kill her, I tell you.'

" 'No need to kill her.'

" 'Kill her!'

" 'No!'

"Then they come in. The woman, who was no fool, shuts her eyes and pretends to be asleep. She sets to work to sleep like a child, with her hand on her heart, and takes to breathing like a cherub. The man opens the lantern and shines the light straight into the eyes of the sleeping old woman—she does not move an eyelash, she is in such terror for her neck.

" 'She is sleeping like a log; you can see that quite well,' so says the tall one.

" 'Old women are so cunning!' answers the short man. 'I will kill her. We shall feel easier in our minds. Besides, we will salt her down to feed the pigs.'

"The old woman hears all this talk, but she does not stir.

"'Oh! it is all right, she is asleep,' says the short ruffian, when he saw that the hunchback had not stirred.

"That is how the old woman saved her life. And she may be fairly called courageous; for it is a fact that there are not many girls here who could have breathed like cherubs while they heard that talk going on about the pigs. Well, the two brigands set to work to lift up the dead man; they wrap him round in the sheets and chuck him out into the little yard; and the old woman hears the pigs scampering up to eat him, and grunting, *Hon! hon!*

"So when morning comes," the narrator resumed after a pause, "the woman gets up and goes down, paying a couple of *sous* for her bed. She takes up her wallet, goes on just as if nothing had happened, asks for the news of the countryside, and gets away in peace. She wants to run. Running is quite out of the question, her legs fail her for fright; and lucky it was for her that she could not run, for this reason. She had barely gone half a quarter of a league before she sees one of the brigands coming after her, just out of craftiness to make quite sure that she had seen nothing. She guesses this, and sits herself down on a boulder.

"'What is the matter, good woman?' asks the short one, for it was the shorter one and the wickeder of the two who was dogging her.

"'Oh! master,' says she, 'my wallet is so heavy, and I am so tired, that I badly want some good man to give me his arm' (sly thing, only listen to her!) 'if I am to get back to my poor home.'

"Thereupon the brigand offers to go along with her, and she accepts his offer. The fellow takes hold of her arm to see if she is afraid. Not she! She does not tremble a bit, and walks quietly along. So there they are, chatting away as nicely as possible, all about farming, and the way to grow hemp, till they come to the outskirts of the town, where the hunchback lived, and the brigand made off for fear of meeting some of the sheriff's people. The woman reached her house

at mid-day, and waited there till her husband came home; she thought and thought over all that had happened on her journey and during the night. The hemp-grower came home in the evening. He was hungry; something must be got ready for him to eat. So while she greases her frying-pan, and gets ready to fry something for him, she tells him how she sold her hemp, and gabbles away as females do, but not a word does she say about the pigs, nor about the gentleman who was murdered and robbed and eaten. She holds her frying-pan in the flames so as to clean it, draws it out again to give it a wipe, and finds it full of blood.

"'What have you been putting into it?' says she to her man.

"'Nothing,' says he.

"She thinks it must have been a nonsensical piece of woman's fancy, and puts her frying-pan into the fire again. . . . *Pouf!* A head comes tumbling down the chimney!

"'Oh! look! It is nothing more nor less than the dead man's head,' says the old woman. 'How he stares at me! What does he want!'

"'*You must avenge me!*' says a voice.

"'What an idiot you are!' said the hemp-grower. 'Always seeing something or other that has no sort of sense about it! Just you all over.'

"He takes up the head, which snaps at his finger, and pitches it out into the yard.

"'Get on with my omelette,' he says, 'and do not bother yourself about that. 'Tis a cat.'

"'A cat!' says she; 'it was as round as a ball.'

"She puts back her frying-pan on the fire. . . . *Pouf!* Down comes a leg this time, and they go through the whole story again. The man was no more astonished at the foot than he had been at the head; he snatched up the leg and threw it out at the door. Before they had finished, the other leg, both arms, the body, the whole murdered traveler, in fact, came down piecemeal. No omelette all this time! The old hemp-seller grew very hungry indeed.

"'By my salvation!' said he, 'when once my omelette is made we will see about satisfying that man yonder.'

"'So you admit, now, that it was a man?' said the hunchback wife. 'What made you say that it was not a head a minute ago, you great worry?'

"The woman breaks the eggs, fries the omelette, and dishes it up without any more grumbling; somehow this squabble began to make her feel very uncomfortable. Her husband sits down and begins to eat. The hunchback was frightened, and said that she was not hungry.

"'Tap! tap!' There was a stranger rapping at the door.

"'Who is there?'

"'The man that died yesterday!'

"'Come in,' answers the hemp-grower.

"So the traveler comes in, sits himself down on a three-legged stool, and says: 'Are you mindful of God, who gives eternal peace to those who confess His Name? Woman! You saw me done to death, and you have said nothing! I have been eaten by the pigs! The pigs do not enter Paradise, and therefore I, a Christian man, shall go down into hell, all because a woman forsooth will not speak, a thing that has never been known before. You must deliver me,' and so on, and so on.

"The woman, who was more and more frightened every minute, cleaned her frying-pan, put on her Sunday clothes, went to the justice, and told him about the crime, which was brought to light, and the robbers were broken on the wheel in proper style on the Market Place. This good work accomplished, the woman and her husband always had the finest hemp you ever set eyes on. Then, which pleased them still better, they had something that they had wished for for a long time, to-wit, a man-child, who in course of time became a great lord of the king's.

"That is the true story of *The Courageous Hunchback Woman.*"

"I do not like stories of that sort; they make me dream at night," said La Fosseuse. "Napoleon's adventures are much nicer, I think."

"Quite true," said the keeper. "Come now, M. Goguelat, tell us about the Emperor."

"The evening is too far gone," said the postman, "and I do not care about cutting short the story of a victory."

"Never mind, let us hear about it all the same! We know the stories, for we have heard you tell them many a time; but it is always a pleasure to hear them."

"Tell us about the Emperor!" cried several voices at once.

"You will have it?" answered Goguelat. "Very good, but you will see that there is no sense in the story when it is gone through at a gallop. I would rather tell you all about a single battle. Shall it be Champ-Aubert, where we ran out of cartridges, and furbished them just the same with the bayonet?"

"No, the Emperor! the Emperor!"

The old infantry man got up from his truss of hay and glanced round about on those assembled, with the peculiar sombre expression in which may be read all the miseries, adventures, and hardships of an old soldier's career. He took his coat by the two skirts in front, and raised them, as if it were a question of once more packing up the knapsack in which his kit, his shoes, and all he had in the world used to be stowed; for a moment he stood leaning all his weight on his left foot, then he swung the right foot forward, and yielded with a good grace to the wishes of his audience. He swept his gray hair to one side, so as to leave his forehead bare, and flung back his head and gazed upwards, as if to raise himself to the lofty height of the gigantic story that he was about to tell.

"Napoleon, you see, my friends, was born in Corsica, which is a French island warmed by the Italian sun; it is like a furnace there, everything is scorched up, and they keep on killing each other from father to son for generations all about nothing at all—'tis a notion they have. To begin at the beginning, there was something extraordinary about the thing from the first; it occurred to his mother, who was the handsomest woman of her time, and a shrewd soul, to dedicate

him to God, so that he should escape all the dangers of infancy and of his after life; for she had dreamed that the world was on fire on the day he was born. It was a prophecy! So she asked God to protect him, on condition that Napoleon should re-establish His holy religion, which had been thrown to the ground just then. That was the agreement; we shall see what came of it.

"Now, do you follow me carefully, and tell me whether what you are about to hear is natural.

"It is certain sure that only a man who had had imagination enough to make a mysterious compact would be capable of going further than anybody else, and of passing through volleys of grape-shot and showers of bullets which carried us off like flies, but which had a respect for his head. I myself had particular proof of that at Eylau. I see him yet; he climbs a hillock, takes his field-glass, looks along our lines, and says, 'That is going on all right.' One of the deep fellows, with a bunch of feathers in his cap, used to plague him a good deal from all accounts, following him about everywhere, even when he was getting his meals. This fellow wants to do something clever, so as soon as the Emperor goes away he takes his place. Oh! swept away in a moment! And that is the last of the bunch of feathers! You understand quite clearly that Napoleon had undertaken to keep his secret to himself. That is why those who accompanied him, and even his especial friends, used to drop like nuts: Duroc, Bessières, Lannes—men as strong as bars of steel, which he cast into shape for his own ends. And here is a final proof that he was the child of God, created to be the soldier's father; for no one ever saw him as a lieutenant or a captain. He is a commandant straight off! Ah! yes, indeed! He did not look more than four-and-twenty, but he was an old general ever since the taking of Toulon, when he made a beginning by showing the rest that they knew nothing about handling cannon. Next thing he does, he tumbles upon us. A little slip of a general-in-chief of the army of Italy, which had neither bread nor ammunition nor shoes nor clothes—a wretched army as naked as a worm.

"'Friends,' he said, 'here we all are together. Now, get it well into your pates that in a fortnight's time from now you will be the victors, and dressed in new clothes; you shall all have greatcoats, strong gaiters, and famous pairs of shoes; but, my children, you will have to march on Milan to take them, where all these things are.'

"So they marched. The French, crushed as flat as a pancake, held up their heads again. There were thirty thousand of us tatterdemalions against eighty thousand swaggerers of Germans—fine tall men and well equipped; I can see them yet. Then Napoleon, who was only Bonaparte in those days, breathed goodness knows what into us, and on we marched night and day. We rap their knuckles at Montenotte; we hurry on to thrash them at Rivoli, Lodi, Arcola, and Millesimo, and we never let them go. The army came to have a liking for winning battles. Then Napoleon hems them in on all sides, these German generals did not know where to hide themselves so as to have a little peace and comfort; he drubs them soundly, cribs ten thousand of their men at a time by surrounding them with fifteen hundred Frenchmen, whom he makes to spring up after his fashion, and at last he takes their cannon, victuals, money, ammunition, and everything they have that is worth taking; he pitches them into the water, beats them on the mountains, snaps at them in the air, gobbles them up on the earth, and thrashes them everywhere.

"There are the troops in full feather again! For, look you, the Emperor (who, for that matter, was a wit) soon sent for the inhabitant, and told him that he had come there to deliver him. Whereupon the civilian finds us free quarters and makes much of us, so do the women, who showed great discernment. To come to a final end; in Ventose '96, which was at that time what the month of March is now, we had been driven up into a corner of the *Pays des Marmottes;* but after the campaign, lo and behold! we were the masters of Italy, just as Napoleon had prophesied. And in the month of March following, in one year and in two campaigns, he brings us within sight of Vienna; we had made a clean sweep

of them. We had gobbled down three armies one after another, and taken the conceit out of four Austrian generals; one of them, an old man who had white hair, had been roasted like a rat in the straw before Mantua. The kings were suing for mercy on their knees. Peace had been won. Could a mere mortal have done that? No. God helped him, that is certain. He distributed himself about like the five loaves in the Gospel, commanded on the battlefield all day, and drew up his plans at night. The sentries always saw him coming and going; he neither ate nor slept. Therefore, recognizing these prodigies, the soldier adopts him for his father. But, forward!

"The other folk there in Paris, seeing all this, say among themselves:

" 'Here is a pilgrim who appears to take his instructions from Heaven above; he is uncommonly likely to lay a hand on France. We must let him loose on Asia or America, and that, perhaps, will keep him quiet.'

"The same thing was decreed for him as for Jesus Christ; for, as a matter of fact, they give him orders to go on duty down in Egypt. See his resemblance to the Son of God! That is not all, though. He calls all his fire-eaters about him, all those into whom he had more particularly put the devil, and talks to them in this way:

" 'My friends, for the time being they are giving us Egypt to stop our mouths. But we will swallow down Egypt in a brace of shakes, just as we swallowed Italy, and private soldiers shall be princes, and shall have broad lands of their own. Forward!'

" 'Forward, lads!' cry the sergeants.

"So we come to Toulon on the way to Egypt. Whereupon the English put to sea with all their fleet. But when we are on board, Napoleon says to us:

" 'They will not see us: and it is right and proper that you should know henceforward that your general has a star in the sky that guides us and watches over us!'

"So said, so done. As we sailed over the sea we took Malta,

by way of an orange to quench his thirst for victory, for he was a man who must always be doing something. There we are in Egypt. Well and good. Different orders. The Egyptians, look you, are men who, ever since the world has been the world, have been in the habit of having giants to reign over them, and armies like swarms of ants; because it is a country full of genii and crocodiles, where they have built up pyramids as big as our mountains, the fancy took them to stow their kings under the pryamids, so as to keep them fresh, a thing which mightily pleases them all round out there. Whereupon, as we landed, the Little Corporal said to us:

" 'My children, the country which you are about to conquer worships a lot of idols which you must respect, because the Frenchman ought to be on good terms with all the world, and fight people without giving annoyance. Get it well into your heads to let everything alone at first; for we shall have it all by and by! And forward!'

"So far so good. But all those people had heard a prophecy of Napoleon, under the name of *Kebir Bonaberdis;* a word which in our lingo means, 'The sultan fires a shot,' and they feared him like the devil. So the Grand Turk, Asia, and Africa have recourse to magic, and they send a demon against us, named the Mahdi, who it was thought had come down from heaven on a white charger which, like its master, was bullet-proof, and the pair of them lived on the air of that part of the world. There are people who have seen them, but for my part I cannot give you any certain information about them. They were the divinities of Arabia and of the Mamelukes who wished their troopers to believe that the Mahdi had the power of preventing them from dying in battle. They gave out that he was an angel sent down to wage war on Napoleon, and to get back Solomon's seal, part of their paraphernalia which they pretended our general had stolen. You will readily understand that we made them cry *peccavi* all the same.

"Ah, just tell me now how they came to know about that compact of Napoleon's? Was that natural?

"They took it into their heads for certain that he commanded the genii, and that he went from place to place like a bird in the twinkling of an eye; and it is a fact that he was everywhere. At length it came about that he carried off a queen of theirs. She was the private property of a Mameluke, who, although he had several more of them, flatly refused to strike a bargain, though 'the other' offered all his treasures for her and diamonds as big as pigeon's eggs. When things had come to that pass, they could not well be settled without a good deal of fighting; and there was fighting enough for everybody and no mistake about it.

"Then we are drawn up before Alexandria, and again at Gizeh, and before the Pyramids. We had to march over the sands and in the sun; people whose eyes dazzled used to see water that they could not drink and shade that made them fume. But we made short work of the Mamelukes as usual, and everything goes down before the voice of Napoleon, who seizes Upper and Lower Egypt and Arabia, far and wide, till we came to the capitals of kingdoms which no longer existed, where there were thousands and thousands of statues of all the devils in creation, all done to the life, and another curious thing too, any quantity of lizards. A confounded country where any one could have as many acres of land as he wished for as little as he pleased.

"While he was busy inland, where he meant to carry out some wonderful ideas of his, the English burn his fleet for him in Aboukir Bay, for they never could do enough to annoy us. But Napoleon, who was respected East and West, and called 'My Son' by the Pope, and 'My dear Father' by Mahomet's cousin, makes up his mind to have his revenge on England, and to take India in exchange for his fleet. He set out to lead us into Asia, by way of the Red Sea, through a country where there were palaces for halting-places, and nothing but gold and diamonds to pay the troops with, when the Mahdi comes to an understanding with the Plague, and sends it among us to make a break in our victories. Halt! Then every man files off to that parade from which no one comes

back on his two feet. The dying soldier cannot take Acre, into which he forces an entrance three times with a warrior's impetuous enthusiasm; the Plague was too strong for us; there was not even time to say 'Your servant, sir!' to the Plague. Every man was down with it. Napoleon alone was as fresh as a rose; the whole army saw him drinking in the Plague without its doing him any harm whatever.

"There now, my friends, was that natural, do you think?

"The Mamelukes, knowing that we were all on the sick-list, want to stop our road; but it was no use trying that nonsense with Napoleon. So he spoke to his familiars, who had tougher skins than the rest:

" 'Go and clear the road for me.'

"Junot, who was his devoted friend, and a first-class fighter, only takes a thousand men, and makes a clean sweep of the Pasha's army, which had the impudence to bar our way. Thereupon back we came to Cairo, our headquarters, and now for another story.

"Napoleon being out of the country, France allowed the people in Paris to worry the life out of her. They kept back the soldiers' pay and all their linen and clothing, left them to starve, and expected them to lay down law to the universe, without taking any further trouble in the matter. They were idiots of the kind that amuse themselves with chattering instead of setting themselves to knead the dough. So our armies were defeated, France could not keep her frontiers; The Man was not there. I say The Man, look you, because that was how they called him; but it was stuff and nonsense, for he had a star of his own and all his other peculiarities, it was the rest of us that were mere men. He hears this history of France after his famous battle of Aboukir, where with a single division he routed the grand army of the Turks, twenty-five thousand strong, and jostled more than half of them into the sea, rrrah! without losing more than three hundred of his own men. That was his last thunder-clap in Egypt. He said to himself, seeing that all was lost down there, 'I know that I am the saviour of France, and to France I must go.'

"But you must clearly understand that the army did not know of his departure; for if they had, they would have kept him there by force to make him Emperor of the East. So there we all are without him, and in low spirits, for he was the life of us. He leaves Kléber in command, a great watch-dog who passed in his checks at Cairo, murdered by an Egyptian whom they put to death by spiking him with a bayonet, which is their way of guillotining people out there; but he suffered so much, that a soldier took pity on the scoundrel and handed his flask to him; and the Egyptian turned up his eyes then and there with all the pleasure in life. But there is not much fun for us about this little affair. Napoleon steps aboard of a little cockleshell, a mere nothing of a skiff, called the *Fortune,* and in the twinkling of an eye, and in the teeth of the English, who were blockading the place with vessels of the line and cruisers and everything that carries canvas, he lands in France, for he always had the faculty of taking the sea at a stride. Was that natural? Bah! as soon as he landed at Fréjus, it is as good as saying that he has set foot in Paris. Everybody there worships him; but he calls the Government together.

"'What have you done to my children, the soldiers?' he says to the lawyers. 'You are a set of good-for-nothings who make fools of other people, and feather your own nests at the expense of France. It will not do. I speak in the name of every one who is discontented.'

"Thereupon they want to put him off and to get rid of him; but not a bit of it! He locks them up in the barracks where they used to argufy and makes them jump out of the windows. Then he makes them follow in his train, and they all become as mute as fishes and supple as tobacco pouches. So he becomes Consul at a blow. He was not the man to doubt the existence of the Supreme Being; he kept his word with Providence, who had kept His promise in earnest; he sets up religion again, and gives back the churches, and they ring the bells for God and Napoleon. So every one is satisfied: *primo,* the priests with whom he allows no one to meddle; *segondo,*

the merchant folk who carry on their trades without fear of the *rapiamus* of the law that had pressed too heavily on them; *tertio,* the nobles; for people had fallen into an unfortunate habit of putting them to death, and he puts a stop to this.

"But there were enemies to be cleared out of the way, and he was not the one to go to sleep after mess; and his eyes, look you, traveled all over the world as if it had been a man's face. The next thing he did was to turn up in Italy; it was just as if he had put his head out of the window and the sight of him was enough; they gulp down the Austrians at Marengo like a whale swallowing gudgeons! *Haouf!* The French Victories blew their trumpets so loud that the whole world could hear the noise, and there was an end of it.

" 'We will not keep on at this game any longer!' say the Germans.

" 'That is enough of this sort of thing,' say the others.

"Here is the upshot. Europe shows the white feather, England knuckles under, general peace all round, and kings and peoples pretending to embrace each other. While then and there the Emperor hits on the idea of the Legion of Honor, there's a fine thing if you like!

"He spoke to the whole army at Boulogne. 'In France,' so he said, 'every man is brave. So the civilian who does gloriously shall be the soldier's sister, the soldier shall be his brother, and both shall stand together beneath the flag of honor.'

"By the time that the rest of us who were away down there in Egypt had come back again, everything was changed. We had seen him last as a general, and in no time we find that he is Emperor! And when this was settled (and it may safely be said that every one was satisfied) there was a holy ceremony such as never was seen under the canopy of heaven. Faith, France gave herself to him, like a handsome girl to a lancer, and the Pope and all his cardinals in robes of red and gold come across the Alps on purpose to anoint him before the army and the people, who clap their hands.

"There is one thing that it would be very wrong to keep

back from you. While he was in Egypt, in the desert not far away from Syria, *the Red Man* had appeared to him on the mountain of Moses, in order to say, 'Everything is going on well.' Then again, on the eve of the victory at Marengo, the Red Man springs to his feet in front of the Emperor for the second time, and says to him:

"'You shall see the world at your feet; you shall be Emperor of the French, King of Italy, master of Holland, ruler of Spain, Portugal, and the Illyrian Provinces, protector of Germany, saviour of Poland, first eagle of the Legion of Honor, and all the rest of it.'

"That Red Man, look you, was a notion of his own, who ran on errands and carried messages, so many people say, between him and his star. I myself have never believed that; but the Red Man is, undoubtedly, a fact. Napoleon himself spoke of the Red Man who lived up in the roof of the Tuileries, and who used to come to him, he said, in moments of trouble and difficulty. So on the night after his coronation Napoleon saw him for the third time, and they talked over a lot of things together.

"Then the Emperor goes straight to Milan to have himself crowned King of Italy, and then came the real triumph of the soldier. For every one who could write became an officer forthwith, and pensions and gifts of duchies poured down in showers. There were fortunes for the staff that never cost France a penny, and the Legion of Honor was as good as an annuity for the rank and file; I still draw my pension on the strength of it. In short, here were armies provided for in a way that had never been seen before! But the Emperor, who knew that he was to be Emperor over everybody, and not only over the army, bethinks himself of the bourgeois, and sets them to build fairy monuments in places that had been as bare as the back of my hand till then. Suppose, now, that you are coming out of Spain and on the way to Berlin; well, you would see triumphal arches, and in the sculpture upon them the common soldiers are done every bit as beautifully as the generals!

"In two or three years Napoleon fills his cellars with gold, makes bridges, palaces, roads, scholars, festivals, laws, fleets, and harbors; he spends millions on millions, ever so much, and ever so much more to it, so that I have heard it said that he could have paved the whole of France with five-franc pieces if the fancy had taken him; and all this without putting any taxes on you people here. So when he was comfortably seated on his throne, and so thoroughly the master of the situation, that all Europe was waiting for leave to do anything for him that he might happen to want; as he had four brothers and three sisters, he said to us, just as it might be by way of conversation, in the order of the day:

"'Children, is it fitting that your Emperor's relations should beg their bread? No; I want them all to be luminaries, like me in fact! Therefore, it is urgently necessary to conquer a kingdom for each one of them, so that the French nation may be masters everywhere, so that the Guard may make the whole earth tremble, and France may spit wherever she likes, and every nation shall say to her, as it is written on my coins, "God protects you."'

"'All right!' answers the army, 'we will fish up kingdoms for you with the bayonet.'

"Ah! there was no backing out of it, look you! If he had taken it into his head to conquer the moon, we should have had to put everything in train, pack our knapsacks, and scramble up; luckily, he had no wish for that excursion. The kings who were used to the comforts of a throne, of course, objected to be lugged off, so we had marching orders. We march, we get there, and the earth begins to shake to its centre again. What times they were for wearing out men and shoe-leather! And the hard knocks that they gave us! Only Frenchmen could have stood it. But you are not ignorant that a Frenchman is a born philosopher; he knows that he must die a little sooner or a little later. So we used to die without a word, because we had the pleasure of watching the Emperor do *this* on the maps."

Here the soldier swung quickly round on one foot, so as to trace a circle on the barn floor with the other.

"'There, that shall be a kingdom,' he used to say, and it was a kingdom. What fine times they were! Colonels became generals whilst you were looking at them, generals became marshals of France, and marshals became kings. There is one of them still left on his feet to keep Europe in mind of those days, Gascon though he may be, and a traitor to France that he might keep his crown; and he did not blush for his shame, for, after all, a crown, look you, is made of gold. The very sappers and miners who knew how to read became great nobles in the same way. And I who am telling you all this have seen in Paris eleven kings and a crowd of princes all round about Napoleon, like rays about the sun! Keep this well in your minds, that as every soldier stood a chance of having a throne of his own (provided he showed himself worthy of it), a corporal of the Guard was by way of being a sight to see, and they gaped at him as he went by; for every one came by his share after a victory, it was made perfectly clear in the bulletin. And what battles they were! Austerlitz, where the army was manœuvred as if it had been a review; Eylau, where the Russians were drowned in a lake, just as if Napoleon had breathed on them and blown them in; Wagram, where the fighting was kept up for three whole days without flinching. In short, there were as many battles as there are saints in the calendar.

"Then it was made clear beyond a doubt that Napoleon bore the Sword of God in his scabbard. He had a regard for the soldier. He took the soldier for his child. He was anxious that you should have shoes, shirts, greatcoats, bread, and cartridges; but he kept up his majesty, too, for reigning was his own particular occupation. But, all the same, a sergeant, or even a common soldier, could go up to him and call him 'Emperor,' just as you might say 'My good friend' to me at times. And he would give an answer to anything you put before him. He used to sleep on the snow just like the rest of us—in short, he looked almost like an ordinary man; but I who am telling you all these things have seen him myself with the grape-shot whizzing about his ears, no

more put out by it than you are at this moment; never moving a limb, watching through his field-glass, always looking after his business; so we stood our ground likewise, as cool and calm as John the Baptist. I do not know how he did it; but whenever he spoke, a something in his words made our hearts burn within us; and just to let him see that we were his children, and that it was not in us to shirk or flinch, we used to walk just as usual right up to the sluts of cannon that were belching smoke and vomiting battalions of balls, and never a man would so much as say, 'Look out!' It was a something that made dying men raise their heads to salute him and cry, 'Long live the Emperor!'

"Was that natural? Would you have done this for a mere man?

"Thereupon, having fitted up all his family, and things having so turned out that the Empress Josephine (a good woman for all that) had no children, he was obliged to part company with her, although he loved her not a little. But he must have children, for reasons of State. All the crowned heads of Europe, when they heard of his difficulty, squabbled among themselves as to who should find him a wife. He married an Austrian princess, so they say, who was the daughter of the Cæsars, a man of antiquity whom everybody talks about, not only in our country, where it is said that most things were his doing, but also all over Europe. And so certain sure is that, that I who am talking to you have been myself across the Danube, where I saw the ruins of a bridge built by that man; and it appeared that he was some connection of Napoleon's at Rome, for the Emperor claimed succession there for his son.

"So, after his wedding, which was a holiday for the whole world, and when they let the people off their taxes for ten years to come (though they had to pay them just the same after all, because the excisemen took no notice of the proclamation)—after his wedding, I say, his wife had a child who was King of Rome; a child was born a King while his father was alive, a thing that had never been seen in the world be-

fore! That day a balloon set out from Paris to carry the news to Rome, and went all the way in one day. There, now! Is there one of you who will stand me out that there was nothing supernatural in that? No, it was decreed on high. And the mischief take those who will not allow that it was wafted over by God Himself, so as to add to the honor and glory of France!

"But there was the Emperor of Russia, a friend of our Emperor's, who was put out because he had not married a Russian lady. So the Russian backs up our enemies the English; for there had always been something to prevent Napoleon from putting a spoke in their wheel. Clearly an end must be made of fowl of that feather. Napoleon is vexed, and he says to us:

"'Soldiers! You have been the masters of every capital in Europe, except Moscow, which is allied to England. So, in order to conquer London and India, which belongs to them in London, I find it absolutely necessary that we go to Moscow.'

"Thereupon the greatest army that ever wore gaiters, and left its footprints all over the globe, is brought together, and drawn up with such peculiar cleverness, that the Emperor passed a million of men in review, all in a single day.

"'Hourra!' cry the Russians, and there is all Russia assembled, a lot of brutes of Cossacks, that you never can come up with! It was country against country, a general stramash; we had to look out for ourselves. 'It was all Asia against Europe,' as the Red Man had said to Napoleon. 'All right,' Napoleon had answered, 'I shall be ready for them.'

"And there, in fact, were all the kings who came to lick Napoleon's hand. Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Poland, and Italy, all speaking us fair and going along with us; it was a fine thing! The Eagles had never cooed before as they did on parade in those days, when they were reared above all the flags of all the nations of Europe. The Poles could not contain their joy because the Emperor had a notion of setting up their kingdom again; and ever since Poland and

France have always been like brothers. In short, the army shouts, 'Russia shall be ours!'

"We cross the frontiers, all the lot of us. We march and better march, but never a Russian do we see. At last all our watch-dogs are encamped at Borodino. That was where I received the Cross, and there is no denying that it was a cursed battle. The Emperor was not easy in his mind; he had seen the Red Man, who said to him, 'My child, you are going a little too fast for your feet; you will run short of men, and your friends will play you false.'

"Thereupon the Emperor proposes a treaty. But before he signs it, he says to us:

"'Let us give these Russians a drubbing!'

"'All right!' cried the army.

"'Forward!' say the sergeants.

"My clothes were all falling to pieces, my shoes were worn out with trapezing over those roads out there, which are not good going at all. But it is all one. 'Since here is the last of the row,' said I to myself, 'I mean to get all I can out of it.'

"We were posted before the great ravine; we had seats in the front row. The signal is given, and seven hundred guns begin a conversation fit to make the blood spirt from your ears. One should give the devil his due, and the Russians let themselves be cut in pieces just like Frenchmen; they did not give way, and we made no advance.

"'Forward!' is the cry; 'here is the Emperor!'

"So it was. He rides past us at a gallop, and makes a sign to us that a great deal depends on our carrying the redoubt. He puts fresh heart into us; we rush forward, I am the first man to reach the gorge. Ah! *mon Dieu!* how they fell, colonels, lieutenants, and common soldiers, all alike! There were shoes to fit up those who had none, and epaulettes for the knowing fellows that knew how to write. . . . Victory is the cry all along the line! And, upon my word, there were twenty-five thousand Frenchmen lying on the field. No more, I assure you! Such a thing was never seen

before; it was just like a field when the corn is cut, with a man lying there for every ear of wheat. That sobered the rest of us. The Man comes, and we make a circle round about him, and he coaxes us round (for he could be very nice when he chose), and persuades us to dine with Duke Humphrey, when we were as hungry as hunters. Then our consoler distributes the Crosses of the Legion of Honor himself, salutes the dead, and says to us, 'On to Moscow!'

" 'To Moscow, so be it,' says the army.

"We take Moscow. What do the Russians do but set fire to their city! There was a blaze, two leagues of bonfire that burned for two days! The buildings fell about our ears like slates, and molten lead and iron came down in showers; it was really horrible; it was a light to see our sorrows by, I can tell you! The Emperor said, 'There, that is enough of this sort of thing; all my men shall stay here.'

"We amuse ourselves for a bit by recruiting and repairing our frames, for we really were much fatigued by the campaign. We take away with us a gold cross from the top of the Kremlin, and every soldier had a little fortune. But on the way back the winter came down on us a month earlier than usual, a matter which the learned (like a set of fools) have never sufficiently explained; and we are nipped with the cold. We were no longer an army after that, do you understand? There was an end of generals and even of the sergeants; hunger and misery took the command instead, and all of us were absolutely equal under their reign. All we thought of was how to get back to France; no one stooped to pick up his gun or his money; every one walked straight before him, and armed himself as he thought fit, and no one cared about glory.

"The Emperor saw nothing of his star all the time, for the weather was so bad. There was some misunderstanding between him and heaven. Poor man, how bad he felt when he saw his Eagles flying with their backs turned on victory! That was really too rough! Well, the next thing is the Beresina. And here and now, my friends, any one can as-

sure you on his honor, and by all that is sacred, that *never,* no, never since there have been men on earth, never in this world has there been seen such a fricasse of an army, caissons, transports, artillery and all, in such snow as that and under such a pitiless sky. It was so cold that you burned your hand on the barrel of your gun if you happened to touch it. There it was that the pontooners saved the army, for the pontooners stood firm at their posts; it was there that Gondrin behaved like a hero, and he is the sole survivor of all the men who were dogged enough to stand in the river so as to build the bridges on which the army crossed over, and so escaped the Russians, who still respected the Grand Army on account of its past victories. And Gondrin is an accomplished soldier," he went on, pointing to his friend, who was gazing at him with the rapt attention peculiar to deaf people, "a distinguished soldier who deserves to have your very highest esteem.

"I saw the Emperor standing by the bridge," he went on, "and never feeling the cold at all. Was that, again, a natural thing? He was looking on at the loss of his treasures, of his friends, and those who had fought with him in Egypt. Bah! there was an end of everything. Women and wagons and guns were all engulfed and swallowed up, everything went to wreck and ruin. A few of the bravest among us saved the Eagles, for the Eagles, look you, meant France, and all the rest of you; it was the civil and military honor of France that was in our keeping, there must be no spot on the honor of France, and the cold could never make her bow her head. There was no getting warm except in the neighborhood of the Emperor; for whenever he was in danger we hurried up, all frozen as we were—we who would not stop to hold out a hand to a fallen friend.

"They say, too, that he shed tears of a night over his poor family of soldiers. Only he and Frenchmen could have pulled themselves out of such a plight; but we did pull ourselves out, though, as I am telling you, it was with loss, ay, and heavy loss. The Allies had eaten up all our provisions; every-

body began to betray him, just as the Red Man had foretold. The rattle-pates in Paris, who had kept quiet ever since the Imperial Guard had been established, think that *he* is dead, and hatch a conspiracy. They set to work in the Home Office to overturn the Emperor. These things come to his knowledge and worry him; he says to us at parting, 'Good-bye, children; keep to your posts, I will come back again.'

"Bah! Those generals of his lose their heads at once; for when he was away, it was not like the same thing. The marshals fall out among themselves, and make blunders, as was only natural, for Napoleon in his kindness had fed them on gold till they had grown as fat as butter, and they had no mind to march. Troubles came of this, for many of them stayed inactive in garrison towns in the rear, without attempting to tickle up the backs of the enemy behind us, and we were being driven back on France. But Napoleon comes back among us with fresh troops; conscripts they were, and famous conscripts too; he had put some thorough notions of discipline into them—the whelps were good to set their teeth in anybody. He had a bourgeois guard of honor too, and fine troops they were! They melted away like butter on a gridiron. We may put a bold front on it, but everything is against us, although the army still performs prodigies of valor. Whole nations fought against nations in tremendous battles, at Dresden, Lützen, and Bautzen, and then it was that France showed extraordinary heroism, for you must all of you bear in mind that in those times a stout grenadier only lasted six months.

"We always won the day, but the English were always on our track, putting nonsense into other nations' heads, and stirring them up to revolt. In short, we cleared a way through all these mobs of nations; for wherever the Emperor appeared, we made a passage for him; for on the land as on the sea, whenever he said, 'I wish to go forward,' we made the way.

"There comes a final end to it at last. We are back in France; and in spite of the bitter weather, it did one's heart

good to breathe one's native air again, it set up many a poor fellow; and as for me, it put new life into me, I can tell you. But it was a question all at once of defending France, our fair land of France. All Europe was up in arms against us; they took it in bad part that we had tried to keep the Russians in order by driving them back within their own borders, so that they should not gobble us up, for those Northern folk have a strong liking for eating up the men of the South, it is a habit they have; I have heard the same thing of them from several generals.

"So the Emperor finds his own father-in-law, his friends whom he had made crowned kings, and the rabble of princes to whom he had given back their thrones, were all against him. Even Frenchmen and allies in our own ranks turned against us, by orders from high quarters, as at Leipsic. Common soldiers would hardly be capable of such abominations; yet these princes, as they called themselves, broke their words three times a day! The next thing they do is to invade France. Wherever our Emperor shows his lion's face, the enemy beats a retreat; he worked more miracles for the defence of France than he had ever wrought in the conquest of Italy, the East, Spain, Europe, and Russia; he has a mind to bury every foreigner in French soil, to give them a respect for France, so he lets them come close up to Paris, so as to do for them at a single blow, and to rise to the highest height of genius in the biggest battle that ever was fought, a mother of battles! But the Parisians wanting to save their trumpery skins, and afraid for their twopenny shops, open their gates, and there is a beginning of the *ragusades,* and an end of all joy and happiness; they make a fool of the Empress, and fly the white flag out at the windows. The Emperor's closest friends among his generals forsake him at last and go over to the Bourbons, of whom no one had ever heard tell. Then he bids us farewell at Fontainebleau:

"'Soldiers!' . . . (I can hear him yet, we were all crying just like children; the Eagles and the flags had been lowered as if for a funeral. Ah! and it was a funeral, I can

tell you; it was the funeral of the Empire; those smart armies of his were nothing but skeletons now.) So he stood there on the flight of steps before his château, and he said:

"'Children, we have been overcome by treachery, but we shall meet again up above in the country of the brave. Protect my child, I leave him in your care. *Long live Napoleon II.!*'

"He had thought of killing himself, so that no one should behold Napoleon after his defeat; like Jesus Christ before the Crucifixion, he thought himself forsaken by God and by his talisman, and so he took enough poison to kill a regiment, but it had no effect whatever upon him. Another marvel! he discovered that he was immortal; and feeling sure of his case, and knowing that he should be Emperor for ever, he went to an island for a little while, so as to study the dispositions of those folk who did not fail to make blunder upon blunder. Whilst he was biding his time, the Chinese and the brutes out in Africa, the Moors and what-not, awkward customers all of them, were so convinced that he was something more than mortal, that they respected his flag, saying that God would be displeased if any one meddled with it. So he reigned over all the rest of the world, although the doors of his own France had been closed upon him.

"Then he goes on board the same nutshell of a skiff that he sailed in from Egypt, passes under the noses of the English vessels, and sets foot in France. France recognizes her Emperor, the cuckoo flits from steeple to steeple; France cries with one voice, 'Long live the Emperor!' The enthusiasm for that Wonder of the Ages was thoroughly genuine in these parts. Dauphiné behaved handsomely; and I was uncommonly pleased to learn that people here shed tears of joy on seeing his gray overcoat once more.

"It was on March 1st that Napoleon set out with two hundred men to conquer the kingdom of France and Navarre, which by March 20th had become the French Empire again. On that day he found himself in Paris, and a clean sweep had been made of everything; he had won back his beloved

France, and had called all his soldiers about him again, and three words of his had done it all—'Here am I!' 'Twas the greatest miracle God ever worked! Was it ever known in the world before that a man should do nothing but show his hat, and a whole Empire became his? They fancied that France was crushed, did they? Never a bit of it. A National Army springs up again at the sight of the Eagle, and we all march to Waterloo. There the Guard fall all as one man. Napoleon in his despair heads the rest, and flings himself three times on the enemy's guns without finding the death he sought; we all saw him do it, we soldiers, and the day was lost! That night the Emperor calls all his old soldiers about him, and there on the battlefield, which was soaked with our blood, he burns his flags and his Eagles—the poor Eagles that had never been defeated, that had cried, 'Forward!' in battle after battle, and had flown above us all over Europe. That was the end of the Eagles—all the wealth of England could not purchase for her one tail-feather. The rest is sufficiently known.

"The Red Man went over to the Bourbons like the low scoundrel he is. France is prostrate, the soldier counts for nothing, they rob him of his due, send him about his business, and fill his place with nobles who could not walk, they were so old, so that it made you sorry to see them. They seize Napoleon by treachery, the English shut him up on a desert island in the ocean, on a rock ten thousand feet above the rest of the world. That is the final end of it; there he has to stop till the Red Man gives him back his power again, for the happiness of France. A lot of them say that he is dead! Dead? Oh! yes, very likely. They do not know him, that is plain! They go on telling that fib to deceive the people, and to keep things quiet for their tumble-down government. Listen; this is the whole truth of the matter. His friends have left him alone in the desert to fulfil a prophecy that was made about him, for I forgot to tell you that his name Napoleon really means the *Lion of the Desert.* And that is gospel truth. You will hear plenty of other things said

about the Emperor, but they are all monstrous nonsense. Because, look you, to no man of woman born would God have given the power to write his name in red, as he did, across the earth, where he will be remembered for ever! . . . Long live 'Napoleon, the father of the soldier, the father of the people!' "

"Long live General Eblé!" cried the pontooner.

"How did you manage not to die in the gorge of the redoubts at Borodino?" asked a peasant woman.

"Do I know? We were a whole regiment when we went down into it, and only a hundred foot were left standing; only infantry could have carried it; for the infantry, look you, is everything in an army——"

"But how about the cavalry?" cried Genestas, slipping down out of the hay in a sudden fashion that drew a startled cry from the boldest.

"Hé, old boy! you are forgetting Poniatowski's Red Lancers, the Cuirassiers, the Dragoons, and the whole boiling. Whenever Napoleon grew tired of seeing his battalions gain no ground towards the end of a victory, he would say to Murat, 'Here, you! cut them in two for me!' and we set out first at a trot, and then at a gallop, *one, two!* and cut a way clean through the ranks of the enemy; it was like slicing an apple in two with a knife. Why, a charge of cavalry is nothing more nor less than a column of cannon balls."

"And how about the pontooners?" cried the deaf veteran.

"There, there! my children," Genestas went on, repenting in his confusion of the sally he had made, when he found himself in the middle of a silent and bewildered group, "there are no agents of police spying here! Here, drink to the Little Corporal with this!"

"Long live the Emperor!" all cried with one voice.

"Hush! children," said the officer, concealing his own deep sorrow with an effort. "Hush! *He is dead.* He died saying, *'Glory, France, and battle.'* So it had to be, children, he must die; but his memory—never!"

Goguelat made an incredulous gesture; then he whispered

to those about him, "The officer is still in the service, and orders have been issued that they are to tell the people that the Emperor is dead. You must not think any harm of him, because, after all, a soldier must obey orders."

As Genestas went out of the barn, he heard La Fosseuse say, "That officer, you know, is M. Benassis' friend, and a friend of the Emperor's."

Every soul in the barn rushed to the door to see the commandant again; they saw him in the moonlight, as he took the doctor's arm.

"It was a stupid thing to do," said Genestas. "Quick! let us go into the house. Those Eagles, cannon, and campaigns! . . . I had quite forgotten where I was."

"Well, what do you think of our Goguelat?" asked Benassis.

"So long as such stories are told in France, sir, she will always find the fourteen armies of the Republic within her, at need; and her cannon will be perfectly able to keep up a conversation with the rest of Europe. That is what I think."

A few moments later they reached Benassis' dwelling, and soon were sitting on either side of the hearth in the salon; the dying fire in the grate still sent up a few sparks now and then. Each was absorbed in thought. Genestas was hesitating to ask one last question. In spite of the marks of confidence that he had received, he feared lest the doctor should regard his inquiry as indiscreet. He looked searchingly at Benassis more than once; and an answering smile, full of a kindly cordiality, such as lights up the faces of men of real strength of character, seemed to give him in advance the favorable reply for which he sought. So he spoke:

"Your life, sir, is so different from the lives of ordinary men, that you will not be surprised to hear me ask you the reason of your retired existence. My curiosity may seem to you to be unmannerly, but you will admit that it is very natural. Listen a moment: I have had comrades with whom I have never been on intimate terms, even though I have

made many campaigns with them; but there have been others to whom I would say, 'Go to the paymaster and draw our money,' three days after we had got drunk together, a thing that will happen, for the quietest folk must have a frolic fit at times. Well, then, you are one of those people whom I take for a friend without waiting to ask leave, nay, without so much as knowing wherefore."

"Captain Bluteau——"

Whenever the doctor had called his guest by his assumed name, the latter had been unable for some time past to suppress a slight grimace. Benassis, happening to look up just then, caught this expression of repugnance; he sought to discover the reason of it, and looked full into the soldier's face, but the real enigma was well-nigh insoluble for him, so he set down these symptoms to physical suffering, and went on:

"Captain, I am about to speak of myself. I have had to force myself to do so already several times since yesterday, while telling you about the improvements that I have managed to introduce here; but it was a question of the interests of the people and the commune, with which mine are necessarily bound up. But, now, if I tell you my story, I should have to speak wholly of myself, and mine has not been a very interesting life."

"If it were as uneventful as La Fosseuse's life," answered Genestas, "I should still be glad to know about it; I should like to know the untoward events that could bring a man of your calibre into this canton."

"Captain, for these twelve years I have lived in silence; and now, as I wait at the brink of the grave for the stroke that will cast me into it, I will candidly own to you that this silence is beginning to weigh heavily upon me. I have borne my sorrows alone for twelve years; I have had none of the comfort that friendship gives in such full measure to a heart in pain. My poor sick folk and my peasants certainly set me an example of unmurmuring resignation; but they know that I at least understand them and their troubles, while there is not a soul here who knows of the tears that I

have shed, no one to give me the hand-clasp of a comrade, the noblest reward of all, a reward that falls to the lot of every other, even Gondrin has not missed that."

Genestas held out his hand, a sudden impulsive movement by which Benassis was deeply touched.

"There is La Fosseuse," he went on in a different voice; "she perhaps would have understood as the angels might; but then, too, she might possibly have loved me, and that would have been a misfortune. Listen, captain, my confession could only be made to an old soldier who looks as leniently as you do on the failings of others, or to some young man who has not lost the illusions of youth; for only a man who knows life well, or a lad to whom it is all unknown, could understand my story. The captains of past times who fell upon the field of battle used to make their last confession to the cross on the hilt of their sword; if there was no priest at hand, it was the sword that received and kept the last confidences between a human soul and God. And will you hear and understand me, for you are one of Napoleon's finest sword-blades, as thoroughly tempered and as strong as steel? Some parts of my story can only be understood by a delicate tenderness, and through a sympathy with the beliefs that dwell in simple hearts; beliefs which would seem absurd to the sophisticated people who make use in their own lives of the prudential maxims of worldly wisdom that only apply to the government of states. To you I shall speak openly and without reserve, as a man who does not seek to apologize for his life with the good and evil done in the course of it; as one who will hide nothing from you, because he lives so far from the world of to-day, careless of the judgments of man, and full of hope in God."

Benassis stopped, rose to his feet, and said, "Before I begin my story, I will order tea. Jacquotte has never missed asking me if I will take it for these twelve years past, and she will certainly interrupt us. Do you care about it, captain?"

"No, thank you."

In another moment Benassis returned.

IV.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR'S CONFESSION

"I WAS born in a little town in Languedoc," the doctor resumed. "My father had been settled there for many years, and there my early childhood was spent. When I was eight years old I was sent to the school of the Oratorians at Sorrèze, and only left it to finish my studies in Paris. My father had squandered his patrimony in the course of an exceedingly wild and extravagant youth. He had retrieved his position partly by a fortunate marriage, partly by the slow persistent thrift characteristic of provincial life; for in the provinces people pride themselves on accumulating rather than on spending, and all the ambition in a man's nature is either extinguished or directed to money-getting, for want of any nobler end. So he had grown rich at last, and thought to transmit to his only son all the cut-and-dried experience which he himself had purchased at the price of his lost illusions; a noble last illusion of age which fondly seeks to bequeath its virtues and its wary prudence to heedless youth, intent only on the enjoyment of the enchanted life that lies before it.

"This foresight on my father's part led him to make plans for my education for which I had to suffer. He sedulously concealed my expectations of wealth from me, and during the fairest years of my youth compelled me, for my own good, to endure the burden of anxiety and hardship that presses upon a young man who has his own way to make in the world. His idea in so doing was to instill the virtues of poverty into me—patience, a thirst for learning, and a love of work for its own sake. He hoped to teach me to set a proper value on my inheritance, by letting me learn, in this

way, all that it costs to make a fortune; wherefore, as soon as I was old enough to understand his advice, he urged me to choose a profession and to work steadily at it. My tastes inclined me to the study of medicine.

"So I left Sorrèze, after ten years of the almost monastic discipline of the Oratorians; and, fresh from the quiet life of a remote provincial school, I was taken straight to the capital. My father went with me in order to introduce me to the notice of a friend of his; and (all unknown to me) my two elders took the most elaborate precautions against any ebullitions of youth on my part, innocent lad though I was. My allowance was rigidly computed on a scale based upon the absolute necessaries of life, and I was obliged to produce my certificate of attendance at the École de Médecine before I was allowed to draw my quarter's income. The excuse for this sufficiently humiliating distrust was the necessity of my acquiring methodical and business-like habits. My father, however, was not sparing of money for all the necessary expenses of my education and for the amusements of Parisian life.

"His old friend was delighted to have a young man to guide through the labyrinth into which I had entered. He was one of those men whose natures lead them to docket their thoughts, feelings, and opinions every whit as carefully as their papers. He would turn up last year's memorandum book, and could tell in a moment what he had been doing a twelvemonth since in this very month, day, and hour of the present year. Life, for him, was a business enterprise, and he kept the books after the most approved business methods. There was real worth in him though he might be punctilious, shrewd, and suspicious, and though he never lacked specious excuses for the precautionary measures that he took with regard to me. He used to buy all my books; he paid for my lessons; and once, when the fancy took me to learn to ride, the good soul himself found me out a riding-school, went thither with me, and anticipated my wishes by putting a horse at my disposal whenever I had a holiday. In spite of

all this cautious strategy, which I managed to defeat as soon as I had any temptation to do so, the kind old man was a second father to me.

" 'My friend,' he said, as soon as he surmised that I should break away altogether from my leading strings, unless he relaxed them, 'young folk are apt to commit follies which draw down the wrath of their elders upon their heads, and you may happen to want money at some time or other; if so, come to me. Your father helped me nobly once upon a time, and I shall always have a few crowns to spare for you; but never tell me any lies, and do not be ashamed to own to your faults. I myself was young once; we shall always get on well together, like two good comrades.'

"My father found lodgings for me with some quiet, middle-class people in the Latin Quarter, and my room was furnished nicely enough; but this first taste of independence, my father's kindness, and the self-denial which he seemed to be exercising for me, brought me but little happiness. Perhaps the value of liberty cannot be known until it has been experienced; and the memories of the freedom of my childhood had been almost effaced by the irksome and dreary life at school, from which my spirits had scarcely recovered. In addition to this, my father had urged new tasks upon me, so that altogether Paris was an enigma. You must acquire some knowledge of its pleasures before you can amuse yourself in Paris.

"My real position, therefore, was quite unchanged, save that my new *lycée* was a much larger building, and was called the École de Médecine. Nevertheless, I studied away bravely at first; I attended lectures diligently; I worked desperately hard and without relaxation, so strongly was my imagination affected by the abundant treasures of knowledge to be gained in the capital. But very soon I heedlessly made acquaintances; danger lurks hidden beneath the rash confiding friendships that have so strong a charm for youth, and gradually I was drawn into the dissipated life of the capital. I became an enthusiastic lover of the theatre; and

with my craze for actors and the play, the work of my demoralization began. The stage, in a great metropolis, exerts a very deadly influence over the young; they never quit the theatre save in a state of emotional excitement almost always beyond their power to control; society and the law seem to me to be accessories to the irregularities brought about in this way. Our legislation has shut its eyes, so to speak, to the passions that torment a young man between twenty and five-and-twenty years of age. In Paris he is assailed by temptations of every kind. Religion may preach and Law may demand that he should walk uprightly, but all his surroundings and the tone of those about him are so many incitements to evil. Do not the best of men and the most devout women there look upon continence as ridiculous? The great city, in fact, seems to have set herself to give encouragement to vice and to this alone; for a young man finds that the entrance to every honorable career in which he might look for success is barred by hindrances even more numerous than the snares that are continually set for him, so that through his weaknesses he may be robbed of his money.

"For a long while I went every evening to some theatre, and little by little I fell into idle ways. I grew more and more slack over my work; even my most pressing tasks were apt to be put off till the morrow, and before very long there was an end of my search after knowledge for its own sake; I did nothing more than the work which was absolutely required to enable me to get through the examinations that must be passed before I could become a doctor. I attended the public lectures, but I no longer paid any attention to the professors, who, in my opinion, were a set of dotards. I had already broken my idols—I became a Parisian.

"To be brief, I led the aimless drifting life of a young provincial thrown into the heart of a great city; still retaining some good and true feeling, still clinging more or less to the observance of certain rules of conduct, still fighting in vain against the debasing influence of evil examples, though I offered but a feeble, half-hearted resistance, for

the enemy had accomplices within me. Yes, sir, my face is not misleading; past storms have plainly left their traces there. Yet, since I had drunk so deeply of the pure fountain of religion in my early youth, I was haunted in the depths of my soul, through all my wanderings, by an ideal of moral perfection which could not fail one day to bring me back to God by the paths of weariness and remorse. Is not he who feels the pleasures of earth most keenly, sure to be attracted, soon or late, by the fruits of heaven?

"At first I went through the experience, more or less vivid, that always comes with youth—the countless moments of exultation, the unnumbered transports of despair. Sometimes I took my vehement energy of feeling for a resolute will, and over-estimated my powers; sometimes, at the mere sight of some trifling obstacle with which I was about to come into collision, I was far more cast down than I ought to have been. Then I would devise vast plans, would dream of glory, and betake myself to work; but a pleasure party would divert me from the noble projects based on so infirm a purpose. Vague recollections of these great abortive schemes of mine left a deceptive glow in my soul and fostered my belief in myself, without giving me the energy to produce. In my indolent self-sufficiency I was in a very fair way to become a fool, for what is a fool but a man who fails to justify the excellent opinion which he has formed of himself? My energy was directed towards no definite aims; I wished for the flowers of life without the toil of cultivating them. I had no idea of the obstacles, so I imagined that everything was easy; luck, I thought, accounted for success in science and in business, and genius was charlatanism. I took it for granted that I should be a great man, because there was the power of becoming one within me; so I discounted all my future glory, without giving a thought to the patience required for the conception of a great work, nor of the execution, in the course of which all the difficulties of the task appear.

"The sources of my amusements were soon exhausted. The

charm of the theatre does not last for very long; and, for a poor student, Paris shortly became an empty wilderness. They were dull and uninteresting people that I met with in the circle of the family with whom I lived; but these, and an old man who had now lost touch with the world, were all the society that I had.

"So, like every young man who takes a dislike to the career marked out for him, I rambled about the streets for whole days together; I strolled along the quays, through the museums and public gardens, making no attempt to arrive at a clear understanding of my position, and without a single definite idea in my head. The burden of unemployed energies is more felt at that age than at any other; there is such an abundance of vitality running to waste, so much activity without result. I had no idea of the power that a resolute will puts into the hands of a man in his youth; for when he has ideas and puts his whole heart and soul into the work of carrying them out, his strength is yet further increased by the undaunted courage of youthful convictions.

"Childhood in its simplicity knows nothing of the perils of life; youth sees both its vastness and its difficulties, and at the prospect the courage of youth sometimes flags. We are still serving our apprenticeship to life; we are new to the business, a kind of faint-heartedness overpowers us, and leaves us in an almost dazed condition of mind. We feel that we are helpless aliens in a strange country. At all ages we shrink back involuntarily from the unknown. And a young man is very much like the soldier who will walk up to the cannon's mouth, and is put to flight by a ghost. He hesitates among the maxims of the world. The rules of attack and of self-defence are alike unknown to him; he can neither give nor take; he is attracted by women, and stands in awe of them; his very good qualities tell against him, he is all generosity and modesty, and completely innocent of mercenary designs. Pleasure and not interest is his object when he tells a lie; and among many dubious courses, the conscience, with which as yet he has not juggled, points out to him the right way, which he is slow to take.

"There are men whose lives are destined to be shaped by the impulses of their hearts, rather than by any reasoning process that takes place in their heads, and such natures as these will remain for a long while in the position that I have described. This was my own case. I became the plaything of two contending impulses; the desires of youth were always held in check by a faint-hearted sentimentality. Life in Paris is a cruel ordeal for impressionable natures, the great inequalities of fortune or of position inflame their souls and stir up bitter feelings. In that world of magnificence and pettiness envy is more apt to be a dagger than a spur. You are bound either to fall a victim or to become a partisan in this incessant strife of ambitions, desires, and hatreds, in the midst of which you are placed; and by slow degrees the picture of vice triumphant and virtue made ridiculous produces its effect on a young man, and he wavers; life in Paris soon rubs the bloom from conscience, the infernal work of demoralization has begun, and is soon accomplished. The first of pleasures, that which at the outset comprehends all the others, is set about with such perils that it is impossible not to reflect upon the least actions which it provokes, impossible not to calculate all its consequences. These calculations lead to selfishness. If some poor student, carried away by an impassioned enthusiasm, is fain to rise above selfish considerations, the suspicious attitude of those about him makes him pause and doubt; it is so hard not to share their mistrust, so difficult not to be on his guard against his own generous thoughts. His heart is seared and contracted by this struggle, the current of life sets toward the brain, and the callousness of the Parisian is the result—the condition of things in which schemes for power and wealth are concealed by the most charming frivolity, and lurk beneath the sentimental transports that take the place of enthusiasm. The simplest-natured woman in Paris always keeps a clear head even in the intoxication of happiness.

"This atmosphere was bound to affect my opinions and my conduct. The errors that have poisoned my life would

have lain lightly on many a conscience, but we in the South have a religious faith that leads us to believe in a future life, and in the truths set forth by the Catholic Church. These beliefs give depth and gravity to every feeling, and to remorse a terrible and lasting power.

"The army were the masters of society at the time when I was studying medicine. In order to shine in women's eyes, one had to be a colonel at the very least. A poor student counted for absolutely nothing. Goaded by the strength of my desires, and finding no outlet for them; hampered at every step and in every wish by the want of money; looking on study and fame as too slow a means of arriving at the pleasures that tempted me; drawn one way by my inward scruples, and another by evil examples; meeting with every facility for low dissipation, and finding nothing but hindrances barring the way to good society, I passed my days in wretchedness, overwhelmed by a surging tumult of desires, and by indolence of the most deadly kind, utterly cast down at times, only to be as suddenly elated.

"The catastrophe which at length put an end to this crisis was commonplace enough. The thought of troubling the peace of a household has always been repugnant to me; and not only so, I could not dissemble my feelings, the instinct of sincerity was too strong in me; I should have found it a physical impossibility to lead a life of glaring falsity. There is for me but little attraction in pleasures that must be snatched. I wish for full consciousness of my happiness. I led a life of solitude, for which there seemed to be no remedy; for I shrank from openly vicious courses, and the many efforts that I made to enter society were all in vain. There I might have met with some woman who would have undertaken the task of teaching me the perils of every path, who would have formed my manners, counseled me without wounding my vanity, and introduced me everywhere where I was likely to make friends who would be useful to me in my future career. In my despair, an intrigue of the most dangerous kind would perhaps have had its attractions for

me; but even peril was out of my reach. My inexperience sent me back again to my solitude, where I dwelt face to face with my thwarted desires.

"At last I formed a connection, at first a secret one, with a girl, whom I persuaded, half against her will, to share my life. Her people were worthy folk, who had but small means. It was not very long before she left her simple sheltered life, and fearlessly intrusted me with a future that virtue would have made happy and fair; thinking, no doubt, that my narrow income was the surest guarantee of my faithfulness to her. From that moment the tempest that had raged within me ceased, and happiness lulled my wild desires and ambitions to sleep. Such happiness is only possible for a young man who is ignorant of the world, who knows nothing as yet of its accepted codes nor of the strength of prejudice; but while it lasts, his happiness is as all-absorbing as a child's. Is not first love like a return of childhood across the intervening years of anxiety and toil?

"There are men who learn life at a glance, who see it for what it is at once, who learn experience from the mistakes of others, who apply the current maxims of worldly wisdom to their own case with signal success, and make unerring forecasts at all times. Wise in their generation are such cool heads as these! But there is also a luckless race endowed with the impressionable, keenly-sensitive temperament of the poet; these are the natures that fall into error, and to this latter class I belonged. There was no great depth in the feeling that first drew me towards this poor girl; I followed my instinct rather than my heart when I sacrificed her to myself, and I found no lack of excellent reasons wherewith to persuade myself that there was no harm whatever in what I had done. And as for her—she was devotion itself, a noble soul with a clear, keen intelligence and a heart of gold. She never counseled me other than wisely. Her love put fresh heart into me from the first; she foretold a splendid future of success and fortune for me, and gently constrained me to take up my studies again by her

belief in me. In these days there is scarcely a branch of science that has no bearing upon medicine; it is a difficult task to achieve distinction, but the reward is great, for in Paris fame always means fortune. The unselfish girl devoted herself to me, shared in every interest, even the slightest, of my life, and managed so carefully and wisely that we lived in comfort on my narrow income. I had more money to spare, now that there were two of us, than I had ever had while I lived by myself. Those were my happiest days. I worked with enthusiasm, I had a definite aim before me, I had found the encouragement I needed. Everything I did or thought I carried to her, who had not only found the way to gain my love, but above and beyond this had filled me with sincere respect for her by the modest discretion which she displayed in a position where discretion and modesty seemed well-nigh impossible. But one day was like another, sir; and it is only after our hearts have passed through all the storms appointed for us that we know the value of a monotonous happiness, and learn that life holds nothing more sweet for us than this; a calm happiness in which the fatigue of existence is felt no longer, and the inmost thoughts of either find response in the other's soul.

"My former dreams assailed me again. They were my own vehement longings for the pleasures of wealth that awoke, though it was in love's name that I now asked for them. In the evenings I grew abstracted and moody, rapt in imaginings of the pleasures I could enjoy if I were rich, and thoughtlessly gave expression to my desires in answer to a tender questioning voice. I must have drawn a painful sigh from her who had devoted herself to my happiness; for she, sweet soul, felt nothing more cruelly than the thought that I wished for something that she could not give me immediately. Oh! sir, a woman's devotion is sublime!"

There was a sharp distress in the doctor's exclamation which seemed prompted by some recollection of his own; he paused for a brief while, and Genestas respected his musings.

"Well, sir," Benassis resumed, "something happened which should have concluded the marriage thus begun; but instead of that it put an end to it, and was the cause of all my misfortunes. My father died and left me a large fortune. The necessary business arrangements demanded my presence in Languedoc for several months, and I went thither alone. At last I had regained my freedom! Even the mildest yoke is galling to youth; we do not see its necessity any more than we see the need to work, until we have had some experience of life. I came and went without giving an account of my actions to any one; there was no need to do so now unless I wished, and I relished liberty with all the keen capacity for enjoyment that we have in Languedoc. I did not absolutely forget the ties that bound me; but I was so absorbed in other matters of interest, that my mind was distracted from them, and little by little the recollection of them faded away. Letters full of heartfelt tenderness reached me; but at two-and-twenty a young man imagines that all women are alike tender; he does not know love from a passing infatuation; all things are confused in the sensations of pleasure which seem at first to comprise everything. It was only later, when I came to a clearer knowledge of men and of things as they are, that I could estimate those noble letters at their just worth. No trace of selfishness was mingled with the feeling expressed in them; there was nothing but gladness on my account for my change of fortune, and regret on her own; it never occurred to her that I could change towards her, for she felt that she herself was incapable of change. But even then I had given myself up to ambitious dreams; I thought of drinking deeply of all the delights that wealth could give, of becoming a person of consequence, of making a brilliant marriage. So I read the letters, and contented myself with saying, 'She is very fond of me,' with the indifference of a coxcomb. Even then I was perplexed as to how to extricate myself from this entanglement; I was ashamed of it, and this fact as well as my perplexity led me to be cruel. We begin by wounding the victim, and then

we kill it, that the sight of our cruelty may no longer put us to the blush. Late reflections upon those days of error have unveiled for me many a dark depth in the human heart. Yes, believe me, those who best have fathomed the good and evil in human nature have honestly examined themselves in the first instance. Conscience is the starting-point of our investigations; we proceed from ourselves to others, never from others to ourselves.

"When I returned to Paris I took up my abode in a large house which, in pursuance with my orders, had been taken for me, and the one person interested in my return and change of address was not informed of it. I wished to cut a figure among young men of fashion. I waited a few days to taste the first delights of wealth; and when, flushed with the excitement of my new position, I felt that I could trust myself to do so, I went to see the poor girl whom I meant to cast off. With a woman's quickness she saw what was passing in my mind, and hid her tears from me. She could not but have despised me; but it was her nature to be gentle and kindly, and she never showed her scorn. Her forbearance was a cruel punishment. An unresisting victim is not a pleasant thing; whether the murder is done decorously in the drawing-room, or brutally on the highway, there should be a struggle to give some plausible excuse for taking a life. I renewed my visits very affectionately at first, making efforts to be gracious, if not tender; by slow degrees I became politely civil; and one day, by a sort of tacit agreement between us, she allowed me to treat her as a stranger, and I thought that I had done all that could be expected of me. Nevertheless I abandoned myself to my new life with almost frenzied eagerness, and sought to drown in gaiety any vague lingering remorse that I felt. A man who has lost his self-respect cannot endure his own society, so I led the dissipated life that wealthy young men lead in Paris. Owing to a good education and an excellent memory, I seemed cleverer than I really was, forthwith I looked down upon other people; and those who, for their own

purposes, wished to prove to me that I was possessed of extraordinary abilities, found me quite convinced on that head. Praise is the most insidious of all methods of treachery known to the world; and this is nowhere better understood than in Paris, where intriguing schemers know how to stifle every kind of talent at its birth by heaping laurels on its cradle. So I did nothing worthy of my reputation; I reaped no advantages from the golden opinions entertained of me, and made no acquaintances likely to be useful in my future career. I wasted my energies in numberless frivolous pursuits, and in the short-lived love intrigues that are the disgrace of salons in Paris, where every one seeks for love, grows blasé in the pursuit, falls into the libertinism sanctioned by polite society, and ends by feeling as much astonished at real passion as the world is over a heroic action. I did as others did. Often I dealt to generous and candid souls the deadly wound from which I myself was slowly perishing. Yet though deceptive appearances might lead others to misjudge me, I could never overcome my scrupulous delicacy. Many times I have been duped, and should have blushed for myself had it been otherwise; I secretly prided myself on acting in good faith, although this lowered me in the eyes of others. As a matter of fact, the world has a considerable respect for cleverness, whatever form it takes, and success justifies everything. So the world was pleased to attribute to me all the good qualities and evil propensities, all the victories and defeats which had never been mine; credited me with conquests of which I knew nothing, and sat in judgment upon actions of which I had never been guilty. I scorned to contradict the slanders, and self-love led me to regard the more flattering rumors with a certain complacence. Outwardly my existence was pleasant enough, but in reality I was miserable. If it had not been for the tempest of misfortunes that very soon burst over my head, all good impulses must have perished, and evil would have triumphed in the struggle that went on within me; enervating self-indulgence would have destroyed the body, as the detestable habits of

egotism exhausted the springs of the soul. But I was ruined financially. This was how it came about.

"No matter how large his fortune may be, a man is sure to find some one else in Paris possessed of yet greater wealth, whom he must needs aim at surpassing. In this unequal conquest I was vanquished at the end of four years; and, like many another harebrained youngster, I was obliged to sell part of my property and to mortgage the remainder to satisfy my creditors. Then a terrible blow suddenly struck me down.

"Two years had passed since I had last seen the woman whom I had deserted. The turn that my affairs were taking would no doubt have brought me back to her once more; but one evening, in the midst of a gay circle of acquaintances, I received a note written in a trembling hand. It only contained these few words:

" 'I have only a very little while to live, and I should like to see you, my friend, so that I may know what will become of my child—whether henceforward he will be yours; and also to soften the regret that some day you might perhaps feel for my death.'

"The letter made me shudder. It was a revelation of secret anguish in the past, while it contained a whole unknown future. I set out on foot, I would not wait for my carriage, I went across Paris, goaded by remorse, and gnawed by a dreadful fear that was confirmed by the first sight of my victim. In the extreme neatness and cleanliness beneath which she had striven to hide her poverty I read all the terrible sufferings of her life; she was nobly reticent about them in her effort to spare my feelings, and only alluded to them after I had solemnly promised to adopt our child. She died, sir, in spite of all the care lavished upon her, and all that science could suggest was done for her in vain. The care and devotion that had come too late only served to render her last moments less bitter.

"To support her little one she had worked incessantly with her needle. Love for her child had given her strength to

endure her life of hardship; but it had not enabled her to bear my desertion, the keenest of all her griefs. Many times she had thought of trying to see me, but her woman's pride had always prevented this. While I squandered floods of gold upon my caprices, no memory of the past had ever bidden a single drop to fall in her home to help mother and child to live; but she had been content to weep, and had not cursed me; she had looked upon her evil fortune as the natural punishment of her error. With the aid of a good priest of Saint Sulpice, whose kindly voice had restored peace to her soul, she had sought for hope in the shadow of the altar, whither she had gone to dry her tears. The bitter flood that I had poured into her heart gradually abated; and one day, when she heard her child say 'Father,' a word that she had not taught him, she forgave my crime. But sorrow and weeping and days and nights of ceaseless toil injured her health. Religion had brought its consolations and the courage to bear the ills of life, but all too late. She fell ill of a heart complaint brought on by grief and by the strain of expectation, for she always thought that I should return, and her hopes always sprang up afresh after every disappointment. Her health grew worse; and at last, as she was lying on her deathbed, she wrote those few lines, containing no word of reproach, prompted by religion, and by a belief in the goodness in my nature. She knew, she said, that I was blinded rather than bent on doing wrong. She even accused herself of carrying her womanly pride too far. 'If I had only written sooner,' she said, 'perhaps there might have been time for a marriage which would have legitimated our child.'

"It was only on her child's account that she wished for the solemnization of the ties that bound us, nor would she have sought for this if she had not felt that death was at hand to unloose them. But it was too late; even then she had only a few hours to live. By her bedside, where I learned to know the worth of a devoted heart, my nature underwent a final change. I was still at an age when tears are shed.

During those last days, while the precious life yet lingered, my tears, my words, and everything I did bore witness to my heartstricken repentance. The meanness and pettiness of the society in which I had moved, the emptiness and selfishness of women of fashion, had taught me to wish for and to seek an elect soul, and now I had found it—too late. I was weary of lying words and of masked faces; counterfeit passion had set me dreaming; I had called on love; and now I beheld love lying before me, slain by my own hands, and had no power to keep it beside me, no power to keep what was so wholly mine.

"The experience of four years had taught me to know my own real character. My temperament, the nature of my imagination, my religious principles, which had not been eradicated, but had rather lain dormant; my turn of mind, my heart that only now began to make itself felt—everything within me led me to resolve to fill my life with the pleasures of affection, to replace a lawless love by family happiness—the truest happiness on earth. Visions of close and dear companionship appealed to me but the more strongly for my wanderings in the wilderness, my grasping at pleasures unennobled by thought or feeling. So though the revolution within me was rapidly effected, it was permanent. With my southern temperament, warped by the life I led in Paris, I should certainly have come to look without pity on an unhappy girl betrayed by her lover; I should have laughed at the story if it had been told me by some wag in merry company (for with us in France a clever *bon mot* dispels all feeling of horror at a crime), but all sophistries were silenced in the presence of this angelic creature, against whom I could bring no least word of reproach. There stood her coffin, and my child, who did not know that I had murdered his mother, and smiled at me.

"She died. She died happy when she saw that I loved her, and that this new love was due neither to pity nor to the ties that bound us together. Never shall I forget her last hours. Love had been won back, her mind was at rest about

her child, and happiness triumphed over suffering. The comfort and luxury about her, the merriment of her child, who looked prettier still in the dainty garb that had replaced his baby-clothes, were pledges of a happy future for the little one, in whom she saw her own life renewed.

"The curate of Saint Sulpice witnessed my terrible distress. His words well-nigh made me despair. He did not attempt to offer conventional consolation, and put the gravity of my responsibilities unsparingly before me, but I had no need of a spur. The conscience within me spoke loudly enough already. A woman had placed a generous confidence in me. I had lied to her from the first; I had told her that I loved her, and then I had cast her off; I had brought all this sorrow upon an unhappy girl who had braved the opinion of the world for me, and who therefore should have been sacred in my eyes. She had died forgiving me. Her implicit trust in the word of a man who had once before broken his promise to her effaced the memory of all her pain and grief, and she slept in peace. Agatha, who had given me her girlish faith, had found in her heart another faith to give me—the faith of a mother. Oh! sir, the child, *her* child! God alone can know all that he was to me! The dear little one was like his mother; he had her winning grace in his little ways, his talk and ideas; but for me, my child was not only a child, but something more; was he not the token of my forgiveness, my honor?

"He should have more than a father's affection. He should be loved as his mother would have loved him. My remorse might change to happiness if I could only make him feel that his mother's arms were still about him. I clung to him with all the force of human love and the hope of heaven, with all the tenderness in my heart that God has given to mothers. The sound of the child's voice made me tremble. I used to watch him while he slept with a sense of gladness that was always new, albeit a tear sometimes fell on his forehead; I taught him to come to say his prayer upon my bed as soon as he awoke. How sweet and touching were the simple

words of the *Pater noster* in the innocent childish mouth! Ah! and at times how terrible! *'Our Father which art in heaven,'* he began one morning; then he paused—'Why is it not *our mother?'* he asked, and my heart sank at his words.

"From the very first I had sown the seeds of future misfortune in the life of the son whom I idolized. Although the law has almost countenanced errors of youth by conceding to tardy regret a legal status to natural children, the insurmountable prejudices of society bring a strong force to the support of the reluctance of the law. All serious reflection on my part as to the foundations and mechanism of society, on the duties of man, and vital questions of morality date from this period of my life. Genius comprehends at first sight the connection between a man's principles and the fate of the society of which he forms a part; devout souls are inspired by religion with the sentiments necessary for their happiness; but vehement and impulsive natures can only be schooled by repentance. With repentance came new light for me; and I, who only lived for my child, came through that child to think over great social questions.

"I determined from the first that he should have all possible means of success within himself, and that he should be thoroughly prepared to take the high position for which I destined him. He learned English, German, Italian, and Spanish in succession; and, that he might speak these languages correctly, tutors belonging to each of these various nationalities were successively placed about him from his earliest childhood. His aptitude delighted me. I took advantage of it to give him lessons in the guise of play. I wished to keep his mind free from fallacies, and strove before all things to accustom him from childhood to exert his intellectual powers, to make a rapid and accurate general survey of a matter, and then, by a careful study of every least particular, to master his subject in detail. Lastly, I taught him to submit to discipline without murmuring. I never allowed an impure or improper word to be spoken in his hearing. I was careful that all his surroundings, and the

men with whom he came in contact, should conduce to one end—to ennoble his nature, to set lofty ideals before him, to give him a love of truth and a horror of lies, to make him simple and natural in manner, as in word and deed. His natural aptitude had made his other studies easy to him, and his imagination made him quick to grasp these lessons that lay outside the province of the schoolroom. What a fair flower to tend! How great are the joys that mothers know! In those days I began to understand how his own mother had been able to live and to bear her sorrow. This, sir, was the great event of my life; and now I am coming to the tragedy which drove me hither.

"It is the most ordinary commonplace story imaginable; but to me it meant the most terrible pain. For some years I had thought of nothing but my child, and how to make a man of him; then, when my son was growing up and about to leave me, I grew afraid of my loneliness. Love was a necessity of my existence; this need for affection had never been satisfied, and only grew stronger with years. I was in every way capable of a real attachment; I had been tried and proved. I knew all that a steadfast love means, the love that delights to find a pleasure in self-sacrifice; in everything I did my first thought would always be for the woman I loved. In imagination I was fain to dwell on the serene heights far above doubt and uncertainty, where love so fills two beings that happiness flows quietly and evenly into their life, their looks, and words. Such love is to a life what religion is to the soul; a vital force, a power that enlightens and upholds. I understood the love of husband and wife in nowise as most people do; for me its full beauty and magnificence began precisely at the point where love perishes in many a household. I deeply felt the moral grandeur of a life so closely shared by two souls that the trivialities of everyday existence should be powerless against such lasting love as theirs. But where will the hearts be found whose beats are so nearly *isochronous* (let the scientific term pass) that they may attain to this beatific union? If they exist, nature

and chance have set them far apart, so that they cannot come together; they find each other too late, or death comes too soon to separate them. There must be some good reasons for these dispensations of fate, but I have never sought to discover them. I cannot make a study of my wound, because I suffer too much from it. Perhaps perfect happiness is a monster which our species should not perpetuate. There were other causes for my fervent desire for such a marriage as this. I had no friends, the world for me was a desert. There is something in me that repels friendship. More than one person has sought me out, but, in spite of efforts on my part, it came to nothing. With many men I have been careful to show no sign of something that is called 'superiority;' I have adapted my mind to theirs; I have placed myself at their point of view, joined in their laughter, and overlooked their defects; any fame I might have gained, I would have bartered for a little kindly affection. They parted from me without regret. If you seek for real feeling in Paris, snares await you everywhere, and the end is sorrow. Wherever I set my foot, the ground round about me seemed to burn. My readiness to acquiesce was considered weakness; though if I unsheathed my talons, like a man conscious that he may some day wield the thunderbolts of power, I was thought ill-natured; to others, the delightful laughter that ceases with youth, and in which in later years we are almost ashamed to indulge, seemed absurd, and they amused themselves at my expense. People may be bored nowadays, but none the less they expect you to treat every trivial topic with befitting seriousness.

"A hateful era! You must bow down before mediocrity, frigidly polite mediocrity which you despise—and obey. On more mature reflection, I have discovered the reasons of these glaring inconsistencies. Mediocrity is never out of fashion, it is the daily wear of society; genius and eccentricity are ornaments that are locked away and only brought out on certain days. Everything that ventures forth beyond the protection of the grateful shadow of mediocrity has something startling about it.

"So, in the midst of Paris, I led a solitary life. I had given up everything to society, but it had given me nothing in return; and my child was not enough to satisfy my heart, because I was not a woman. My life seemed to be growing cold within me; I was bending under a load of secret misery when I met the woman who was to make me know the might of love, the reverence of an acknowledged love, love with its teeming hopes of happiness—in one word—love.

"I had renewed my acquaintance with that old friend of my father's who had once taken charge of my affairs. It was in his house that I first met her whom I must love as long as life shall last. The longer we live, sir, the more clearly we see the enormous influence of ideas upon the events of life. Prejudices, worthy of all respect, and bred by noble religious ideas, occasioned my misfortunes. This young girl belonged to an exceeding devout family, whose views of Catholicism were due to the spirit of a sect improperly styled Jansenists, which, in former times, caused troubles in France. You know why?"

"No," said Genestas.

"Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, once wrote a book which was believed to contain propositions at variance with the doctrines of the Holy See. When examined at a later date, there appeared to be nothing heretical in the wording of the text, some authors even went so far as to deny that the heretical propositions had any real existence. However it was, these insignificant disputes gave rise to two parties in the Gallican Church—the Jansenists and the Jesuits. Great men were found in either camp, and a struggle began between two powerful bodies. The Jansenists affected an excessive purity of morals and of doctrine, and accused the Jesuits of preaching a relaxed morality. The Jansenists, in fact, were Catholic Puritans, if two contradictory terms can be combined. During the Revolution, the Concordat occasioned an unimportant schism, a little segregation of ultra-catholics who refused to recognize the Bishops appointed by the authorities with the consent of the Pope. This little body of

the faithful was called the Little Church; and those within its fold, like the Jansenists, led the strictly ordered lives that appear to be a first necessity of existence in all proscribed and persecuted sects. Many Jansenist families had joined the Little Church. The family to which this young girl belonged had embraced the equally rigid doctrines of both these Puritanisms, tenets which impart a stern dignity to the character and mien of those who hold them. It is the nature of positive doctrine to exaggerate the importance of the most ordinary actions of life by connecting them with ideas of a future existence. This is the source of a splendid and delicate purity of heart, a respect for others and for self, of an indescribably keen sense of right and wrong, a wide charity, together with a justice so stern that it might well be called inexorable, and lastly, a perfect hatred of lies and of all the vices comprised by falsehood.

"I can recall no more delightful moments than those of our first meeting at my old friend's house. I beheld for the first time this shy young girl with her sincere nature, her habits of ready obedience. All the virtues peculiar to the sect to which she belonged shone in her, but she seemed to be unconscious of her merit. There was a grace, which no austerity could diminish, about every movement of her lissome, slender form; her quiet brow, the delicate grave outlines of her face, and her clearly cut features indicated noble birth; her expression was gentle and proud; her thick hair had been simply braided, the coronet of plaits about her head served, all unknown to her, as an adornment. Captain, she was for me the ideal type that is always made real for us in the woman with whom we fall in love; for when we love, is it not because we recognize beauty that we have dreamed of, the beauty that has existed in idea for us is realized? When I spoke to her, she answered simply, without shyness or eagerness; she did not know what a pleasure it was to me to see her, to hear the musical sounds of her voice. All these angels are revealed to our hearts by the same signs; by the sweetness of their tongues, the tenderness in their eyes, by

their fair, pale faces, and their gracious ways. All these things are so blended and mingled that we feel the charm of their presence, yet cannot tell in what that charm consists, and every movement is an expression of a divine soul within. I loved passionately. This newly awakened love satisfied all my restless longings, all my ambitious dreams. She was beautiful, wealthy, and nobly born; she had been carefully brought up; she had all the qualifications which the world positively demands of a woman placed in the high position which I desired to reach; she had been well educated, she expressed herself with a sprightly facility at once rare and common in France; where the most prettily worded phrases of many women are emptiness itself, while her bright talk was full of sense. Above all, she had a deep consciousness of her own dignity which made others respect her; I know of no more excellent thing in a wife. I must stop, captain; no one can describe the woman he loves save very imperfectly, preëxistent mysteries which defy analysis lie between them.

"I very soon took my old friend into my confidence. He introduced me to her family, and gave me the countenance of his honorable character. I was received at first with the frigid politeness characteristic of those exclusive people who never forsake those whom they have once admitted to their friendship. As time went on they welcomed me almost as one of the family; this mark of their esteem was won by my behavior in the matter. In spite of my passionate love, I did nothing that could lower me in my own eyes; I did not cringe, I paid no court to those upon whom my fate depended, before all things I showed myself a man, and not other than I really was. When I was well known to them, my old friend, who was as desirous as I myself that my life of melancholy loneliness should come to an end, spoke of my hopes and met with a favorable reception; but with the diplomatic shrewdness which is almost a second nature with men of the world, he was silent with regard to an error of my youth, as he termed it. He was anxious to bring about a

'satisfactory marriage' for me, an expression that makes of so solemn an act a business transaction in which husband and wife endeavor to cheat each other. In his opinion, the existence of my child would excite a moral repugnance, in comparison with which the question of money would be as nought, and the whole affair would be broken off at once, and he was right.

"'It is a matter which will be very easily settled between you and your wife; it will be easy to obtain her full and free forgiveness,' he said.

"In short, he tried to silence my scruples, and all the insidious arguments that worldly wisdom could suggest were brought to bear upon me to this end. I will confess to you, sir, that in spite of my promise, my first impulse was to act straightforwardly and to make everything known to the head of the family, but the thought of his uncompromising sternness made me pause, and the probable consequences of the confession appalled me; my courage failed, I temporized with my conscience, I determined to wait until I was sufficiently sure of the affection of the girl I hoped to win, before hazarding my happiness by the terrible confession. My resolution to acknowledge everything openly, at a convenient season, vindicated the sophistries of worldly wisdom and the sagacity of my old friend. So the young girl's parents received me as their future son-in-law without, as yet, taking their friends into their confidence.

"An infinite discretion is the distinguishing quality of pious families; they are reticent about everything, even about matters of no importance. You would not believe, sir, how this sedate gravity and reserve, pervading every least action, deepens the current of feeling and thought. Everything in that house was done with some useful end in view; the women spent their leisure time in making garments for the poor; their conversation was never frivolous; laughter was not banished, but there was a kindly simplicity about their merriment. Their talk had none of the piquancy which scandal and ill-natured gossip give to the conversation of

society; only the father and uncle read the newspapers, even the most harmless journal contains references to crimes or to public evils, and she whom I hoped to win had never cast her eyes over their sheets. How strange it was, at first, to listen to these orthodox people! But in a little while, the pure atmosphere left the same impression upon the soul that subdued colors give to the eyes, a sense of serene repose and of tranquil peace.

"To a superficial observer, their life would have seemed terribly monotonous. There was something chilling about the appearance of the interior of the house. Day after day I used to see everything, even the furniture in constant use, always standing in the same place, and this uniform tidiness pervaded the smallest details. Yet there was something very attractive about their household ways. I had been used to the pleasures of variety, to the luxury and stir of life in Paris; it was only when I had overcome my first repugnance that I saw the advantages of this existence; how it lent itself to continuity of thought and to involuntary meditation; how a life in which the heart has undisturbed sway seems to widen and grow vast as the sea. It is like the life of the cloister, where the outward surroundings never vary, and thought is thus compelled to detach itself from outward things and to turn to the infinite that lies within the soul!

"For a man as sincerely in love as I was, the silence and simplicity of the life, the almost conventual regularity with which the same things were done daily at the same hours, only deepened and strengthened love. In that profound calm the interest attaching to the least action, word, or gesture became immense. I learned to know that, in the interchange of glances and in answering smiles, there lies an eloquence and a variety of language far beyond the possibilities of the most magnificent of spoken phrases; that when the expression of the feelings is spontaneous and unforced, there is no idea, no joy nor sorrow that cannot thus be communicated by hearts that understand each other. How many times I have tried to set forth my soul in my eyes or on my lips, com-

pelled at once to speak and to be silent concerning my passion; for the young girl who, in my presence, was always serene and unconscious had not been informed of the reason of my constant visits; her parents were determined that the most important decision of her life should rest entirely with her. But does not the presence of our beloved satisfy the utmost desire of passionate love? In that presence do we not know the happiness of the Christian who stands before God? If for me more than for any other it was torture to have no right to give expression to the impulses of my heart, to force back into its depths the burning words that treacherously wrong the yet more ardent emotions which strive to find an utterance in speech; I found, nevertheless, in the merest trifles a channel through which my passionate love poured itself forth but the more vehemently for this constraint, till every least occurrence came to have an excessive importance.

"I beheld her, not for brief moments, but for whole hours. There were pauses between my question and her answer, and long musings, when, with the tones of her voice lingering in my ears, I sought to divine from them the secret of her inmost thoughts; perhaps her fingers would tremble as I gave her some object of which she had been in search, or I would devise pretexts to lightly touch her dress or her hair, to take her hand in mine, to compel her to speak more than she wished; all these nothings were great events for me. Eyes and voice and gestures were freighted with mysterious messages of love in hours of ecstasy like these, and this was the only language permitted me by the quiet maidenly reserve of the young girl before me. Her manner towards me underwent no change; with me she was always as a sister with a brother; yet, as my passion grew, and the contrast between her glances and mine, her words and my utterance, became more striking, I felt at last that this timid silence was the only means by which she could express her feelings. Was she not always in the salon whenever I came? Did she not stay there until my visit, expected and perhaps foreseen, was

over? Did not this mute tryst betray the secret of her innocent soul? Nay, whilst I spoke, did she not listen with a pleasure which she could not hide?

"At last, no doubt, her parents grew impatient with this artless behavior and sober love-making. I was almost as timid as their daughter, and perhaps on this account found favor in their eyes. They regarded me as a man worthy of their esteem. My old friend was taken into their confidence; both father and mother spoke of me in the most flattering terms; I had become their adopted son, and more especially they singled out my moral principles for praise. In truth, I had found my youth again; among these pure and religious surroundings early beliefs and early faith came back to the man of thirty-two.

"The summer was drawing to a close. Affairs of some importance had detained the family in Paris longer than their wont; but when September came, and they were able to leave town at last for an estate in Auvergne, her father entreated me to spend a couple of months with them in an old château hidden away among the mountains of the Cantal. I paused before accepting this friendly invitation. My hesitation brought me the sweetest and most delightful unconscious confession, a revelation of the mysteries of a girlish heart. Evelina . . . *Dieu!*" exclaimed Benassis; and he said no more for a time, wrapped in his own thoughts.

"Pardon me, Captain Bluteau," he resumed, after a long pause. "For twelve years I have not uttered the name that is always hovering in my thoughts, that a voice calls in my hearing even when I sleep. Evelina (since I have named her) raised her head with a strange quickness and abruptness, for about all her movements there was an instinctive grace and gentleness, and looked at me. There was no pride in her face, but rather a wistful anxiety. Then her color rose, and her eyelids fell; it gave me an indescribable pleasure never felt before that they should fall so slowly; I could only stammer out my reply in a faltering voice. The emotion of my own heart made swift answer to hers. She thanked me by a

happy look, and I almost thought that there were tears in her eyes. In that moment we had told each other everything. So I went into the country with her family. Since the day when our hearts had understood each other, nothing seemed to be as it had been before; everything about us had acquired a fresh significance.

"Love, indeed, is always the same, though our imagination determines the shape that love must assume; like and unlike, therefore, is love in every soul in which he dwells, and passion becomes a unique work in which the soul expresses its sympathies. In the old trite saying that love is a projection of self—an *égoïsme à deux*—lies a profound meaning known only to philosopher and poet; for it is ourself in truth that we love in that other. Yet, though love manifests itself in such different ways that no pair of lovers since the world began is like any other pair before or since, they all express themselves after the same fashion, and the same words are on the lips of every girl, even of the most innocent, convent-bred maiden—the only difference lies in the degree of imaginative charm in their ideas. But between Evelina and other girls there was this difference, that where another would have poured out her feelings quite naturally, Evelina regarded these innocent confidences as a concession made to the stormy emotions which had invaded the quiet sanctuary of her girlish soul. The constant struggle between her heart and her principles gave to the least event of her life, so peaceful in appearance, in reality so profoundly agitated, a character of force very superior to the exaggerations of young girls whose manners are early rendered false by the world about them. All through the journey Evelina discovered beauty in the scenery through which we passed, and spoke of it with admiration. When we think that we may not give expression to the happiness which is given to us by the presence of one we love, we pour out the secret gladness that overflows our hearts upon inanimate things, investing them with beauty in our happiness. The charm of the scenery which passed before our eyes became in this way an inter-

preter between us, for in our praises of the landscape we revealed to each other the secrets of our love. Evelina's mother sometimes took a mischievous pleasure in disconcerting her daughter.

" 'My dear child, you have been through this valley a score of times without seeming to admire it!' she remarked after a somewhat too enthusiastic phrase from Evelina.

" 'No doubt it was because I was not old enough to understand beauty of this kind, mother.'

"Forgive me for dwelling on this trifle, which can have no charm for you, captain; but the simple words brought me an indescribable joy, which had its source in the glance directed towards me as she spoke. So some village lighted by the sunrise, some ivy-covered ruin which we had seen together, memories of outward and visible things, served to deepen and strengthen the impressions of our happiness; they seemed to be landmarks on the way through which we were passing towards a bright future that lay before us.

"We reached the château belonging to her family, where I spent about six weeks, the only time in my life during which Heaven has vouchsafed complete happiness to me. I enjoyed pleasures unknown to town-dwellers—all the happiness which two lovers find in living beneath the same roof, an anticipation of the life they will spend together. To stroll through the fields, to be alone together at times if we wished it, to look over an old water-mill, to sit beneath a tree in some lovely glen among the hills, the lovers' talks, the sweet confidences drawn forth by which each made some progress day by day in the other's heart. Ah! sir, the out-of-door life, the beauty of earth and heaven, is a perfect accompaniment to the perfect happiness of the soul! To mingle our careless talk with the song of the birds among the dewy leaves, to smile at each other as we gazed on the sky, to turn our steps slowly homewards at the sound of the bell that always rings too soon, to admire together some little detail in the landscape, to watch the fitful movements of an insect, to look closely at a gleaming demoiselle fly—the delicate

creature that resembles an innocent and loving girl; in such ways as these are not one's thoughts drawn daily a little higher? The memories of my forty days of happiness have in a manner colored all the rest of my life, memories that are all the fairer and fill the greater space in my thoughts, because since then it has been my fate never to be understood. To this day there are scenes of no special interest for a casual observer, but full of bitter significance for a broken heart, which recall those vanished days, and the love that is not forgotten yet.

"I do not know whether you noticed the effect of the sunset light on the cottage where little Jacques lives? Everything shone so brightly in the fiery rays of the sun, and then all at once the whole landscape grew dark and dreary. That sudden change was like the change in my own life at this time. I received from her the first, the sole and sublime token of love that an innocent girl may give; the more secretly it is given, the closer is the bond it forms, the sweet promise of love, a fragment of the language spoken in a fairer world than this. Sure, therefore, of being beloved, I vowed that I would confess everything at once, that I would have no secrets from her; I felt ashamed that I had so long delayed to tell her about the sorrows that I had brought upon myself.

"Unluckily, with the morrow of this happy day a letter came from my son's tutor, the life of the child so dear to me was in danger. I went away without confiding my secret to Evelina, merely telling her family that I was urgently required in Paris. Her parents took alarm during my absence. They feared that there I was entangled in some way, and wrote to Paris to make inquiries about me. It was scarcely consistent with their religious principles; but they suspected me, and did not even give me an opportunity of clearing myself.

"One of their friends, without my knowledge, gave them the whole history of my youth, blackening my errors, laying stress upon the existence of my child, which (said they) I

intended to conceal. I wrote to my future parents, but I received no answers to my letters; and when they came back to Paris, and I called at their house, I was not admitted. Much alarmed, I sent to my old friend to learn the reason of this conduct on their part, which I did not in the least understand. As soon as the good soul knew the real cause of it all, he sacrificed himself generously, took upon himself all the blame of my reserve, and tried to exculpate me, but all to no purpose. Questions of interest and morality were regarded so seriously by the family, their prejudices were so firmly and deeply rooted, that they never swerved from their resolution. My despair was overwhelming. At first I tried to deprecate their wrath, but my letters were sent back to me unopened. When every possible means had been tried in vain; when her father and mother had plainly told my old friend (the cause of my misfortune) that they would never consent to their daughter's marriage with a man who had upon his conscience the death of a woman and the life of a natural son, even though Evelina herself should implore them upon her knees; then, sir, there only remained to me one last hope, a hope as slender and fragile as the willow-branch at which a drowning wretch catches to save himself.

"I ventured to think that Evelina's love would be stronger than her father's scruples, that her inflexible parents might yield to her entreaties. Perhaps, who knows, her father had kept from her the reasons of the refusal, which was so fatal to our love. I determined to acquaint her with all the circumstances, and to make a final appeal to her; and in fear and trembling, in grief and tears, my first and last love-letter was written. To-day I can only dimly remember the words dictated to me by my despair; but I must have told Evelina that if she had dealt sincerely with me she could not and ought not to love another, or how could her whole life be anything but a lie? she must be false either to her future husband or to me. Could she refuse to the lover, who had been so misjudged and hardly entreated, the devotion which she would have shown to him as her husband, if the

marriage which had already taken place in our hearts had been outwardly solemnized? Was not this to fall from the ideal of womanly virtue? What woman would not love to feel that the promises of the heart were more sacred and binding than the chains forged by the law? I defended my errors; and in my appeal to the purity of innocence, I left nothing unsaid that could touch a noble and generous nature. But as I am telling you everything, I will look for her answer and my farewell letter," said Benassis, and he went up to his room in search of it.

He returned in a few moments with a worn pocketbook; his hands trembled with emotion as he drew from it some loose sheets.

"Here is the fatal letter," he said. "The girl who wrote those lines little knew the value that I should set upon the scrap of paper that holds her thoughts. This is the last cry that pain wrung from me," he added, taking up a second letter; "I will lay it before you directly. My old friend was the bearer of my letter of entreaty; he gave it to her without her parents' knowledge, humbling his white hair to implore Evelina to read and to reply to my appeal. This was her answer:

" 'Monsieur . . .' But lately I had been her 'beloved,' the innocent name she had found by which to express her innocent love, and now she called me *Monsieur!* . . . That one word told me everything. But listen to the rest of the letter:

" 'Treachery on the part of one to whom her life was to be intrusted is a bitter thing for a girl to discover; and yet I could not but excuse you, we are so weak! Your letter touched me, but you must not write to me again, the sight of your handwriting gives me such unbearable pain. We are parted for ever. I was carried away by your reasoning; it extinguished all the harsh feelings that had risen up against you in my soul. I had been so proud of your truth! But both of us have found my father's reasoning irresistible. Yes, monsieur, I ventured to plead for you. I did for you

what I have never done before, I overcame the greatest fears that I have ever known, and acted almost against my nature. Even now I am yielding to your entreaties, and doing wrong for your sake, in writing to you without my father's knowledge. My mother knows that I am writing to you; her indulgence in leaving me at liberty to be alone with you for a moment has taught me the depth of her love for me, and strengthened my determination to bow to the decree of my family, against which I had almost rebelled. So I am writing to you, monsieur, for the first and last time. You have my full and entire forgiveness for the troubles that you have brought into my life. Yes, you are right; a first love can never be forgotten. I am no longer an innocent girl; and, as an honest woman, I can never marry another. What my future will be, I know not therefore. Only you see, monsieur, that echoes of this year that you have filled will never die away in my life. But I am in no way accusing you. . . . "I shall always be beloved!" Why did you write those words? Can they bring peace to the troubled soul of a lonely and unhappy girl? Have you not already laid waste my future, giving me memories which will never cease to revisit me? Henceforth I can only give myself to God, but will He accept a broken heart? He has had some purpose to fulfil in sending these afflictions to me; doubtless it was His will that I should turn to Him, my only refuge here below. Nothing remains to me here upon this earth. You have all a man's ambition wherewith to beguile your sorrows. I do not say this as a reproach; it is a sort of religious consolation. If we both bear a grievous burden at this moment, I think that my share of it is the heavier. He in whom I have put my trust, and of whom you can feel no jealousy, has joined our lives together, and He puts them asunder according to His will. I have seen that your religious beliefs were not founded upon the pure and living faith which alone enables us to bear our woes here below. Monsieur, if God will vouchsafe to hear my fervent and ceaseless prayers, He will cause His light to shine in your soul. Farewell, you who

should have been my guide, you whom once I had the right to call "my beloved," no one can reproach me if I pray for you still. God orders our days as it pleases Him. Perhaps you may be the first whom He will call to himself; but if I am left alone in the world, then, monsieur, intrust the care of the child to me.'

"This letter, so full of generous sentiments, disappointed my hopes," Benassis resumed, "so that at first I could think of nothing but my misery; afterwards I welcomed the balm which, in her forgetfulness of self, she had tried to pour into my wounds, but in my first despair I wrote to her somewhat bitterly:

" 'Mademoiselle—that word alone will tell you that at your bidding I renounce you. There is something indescribably sweet in obeying one we love, who puts us to the torture. You are right, I acquiesce in my condemnation. Once I slighted a girl's devotion; it is fitting, therefore, that my love should be rejected to-day. But I little thought that my punishment was to be dealt to me by the woman at whose feet I had laid my life. I never expected that such harshness, perhaps I should say, such rigid virtue, lurked in a heart that seemed to be so loving and so tender. At this moment the full strength of my love is revealed to me; it has survived the most terrible of all trials, the scorn you have shown for me by severing without regret the ties that bound us. Farewell for ever. There still remains to me the proud humility of repentance; I will find some sphere of life where I can expiate the errors to which you, the mediator between Heaven and me, have shown no mercy. Perhaps God may be less inexorable. My sufferings, sufferings full of the thought of you, shall be the penance of a heart which will never be healed, which will bleed in solitude. For a wounded heart—shadow and silence.

" 'No other image of love shall be engraven on my heart. Though I am not a woman, I feel as you felt that when I said "I love you," it was a vow for life. Yes, the words then

spoken in the ear of "my beloved" were not a lie; you would have a right to scorn me if I could change. I shall never cease to worship you in my solitude. In spite of the gulf set between us, you will still be the mainspring of all my actions, and all the virtues are inspired by penitence and love. Though you have filled my heart with bitterness, I shall never have bitter thoughts of you; would it not be an ill beginning of the new tasks that I have set myself if I did not purge out all the evil leaven from my soul? Farewell, then, to the one heart that I love in the world, a heart from which I am cast out. Never has more feeling and more tenderness been expressed in a farewell, for is it not fraught with the life and soul of one who can never hope again, and must be henceforth as one dead? . . . Farewell. May peace be with you, and may all the sorrow of our lot fall to me!'"

Benassis and Genestas looked at each other for a moment after reading the two letters, each full of sad thoughts, of which neither spoke.

"As you see, this is only a rough copy of my last letter," said Benassis; "it is all that remains to me to-day of my blighted hopes. When I had sent the letter, I fell into an indescribable state of depression. All the ties that hold one to life were bound together in the hope of wedded happiness, which was henceforth lost to me for ever. I had to bid farewell to the joys of a permitted and acknowledged love, to all the generous ideas that had thronged up from the depths of my heart. The prayers of a penitent soul that thirsted for righteousness and for all things lovely and of good report, had been rejected by these religious people. At first, the wildest resolutions and most frantic thoughts surged through my mind, but happily for me the sight of my son brought self-control. I felt all the more strongly drawn towards him for the misfortunes of which he was the innocent cause, and for which I had in reality only myself to blame. In him I found all my consolation.

"At the age of thirty-four I might still hope to do my country noble service. I determined to make a name for myself, a name so illustrious that no one should remember the stain on the birth of my son. How many noble thoughts I owe to him! How full a life I led in those days while I was absorbed in planning out his future! I feel stifled," cried Benassis. "All this happened eleven years ago, and yet to this day I cannot bear to think of that fatal year. . . . My child died, sir; I lost him!"

The doctor was silent, and hid his face in his hands; when he was somewhat calmer he raised his head again, and Genestas saw that his eyes were full of tears.

"At first it seemed as if this thunderbolt had uprooted me," Benassis resumed. "It was a blow from which I could only expect to recover after I had been transplanted into a different soil from that of the social world in which I lived. It was not till some time afterwards that I saw the finger of God in my misfortunes, and later still that I learned to submit to His will and to hearken to His voice. It was impossible that resignation should come to me all at once. My impetuous and fiery nature broke out in a final storm of rebellion.

"It was long before I brought myself to take the only step befitting a Catholic, indeed my thoughts ran on suicide. This succession of misfortunes had contributed to develop melancholy feelings in me, and I deliberately determined to take my own life. It seemed to me that it was permissible to take leave of life when life was ebbing fast. There was nothing unnatural, I thought, about suicide. The ravages of mental distress affected the soul of man in the same way that acute physical anguish affected the body; and an intelligent being, suffering from a moral malady, had surely a right to destroy himself, a right he shares with the sheep, that, fallen a victim to the 'staggers,' beats its head against a tree. Were the soul's diseases in truth more readily cured than those of the body? I scarcely think so, to this day. Nor do I know which is the more craven soul—he who hopes

even when hope is no longer possible, or he who despairs. Death is the natural termination of a physical malady, and it seemed to me that suicide was the final crisis in the sufferings of a mind diseased, for it was in the power of the will to end them when reason showed that death was preferable to life. So it is not the pistol, but a thought that puts an end to our existence. Again, when fate may suddenly lay us low in the midst of a happy life, can we be blamed for ourselves refusing to bear a life of misery?

"But my reflections during that time of mourning turned on loftier themes. The grandeur of pagan philosophy attracted me, and for a while I became a convert. In my efforts to discover new rights for man, I thought that with the aid of modern thought I could penetrate further into the questions to which those old-world systems of philosophy had furnished solutions.

"Epicurus permitted suicide. Was it not the natural outcome of his system of ethics? The gratification of the senses was to be obtained at any cost; and when this became impossible, the easiest and best course was for the animate being to return to the repose of inanimate nature. Happiness, or the hope of happiness, was the one end for which man existed, for one who suffered, and who suffered without hope, death ceased to be an evil, and became a good, and suicide became a final act of wisdom. This act Epicurus neither blamed nor praised; he was content to say as he poured a libation to Bacchus, '*As for death, there is nothing in death to move our laughter or our tears.*'

"With a loftier morality than that of the Epicureans, and a sterner sense of man's duties, Zeno and the Stoic philosophers prescribed suicide in certain cases to their followers. They reasoned thus: Man differs from the brute in that he has the sovereign right to dispose of his person; take away this power of life and death over himself, and he becomes the plaything of fate, the slave of other men. Rightly understood, this power of life and death is a sufficient counterpoise for all the ills of life; the same power when conferred

upon another, upon his fellow-man, leads to tyranny of every kind. Man has no power whatever unless he has unlimited freedom of action. Suppose that he has been guilty of some irreparable error, from the shameful consequences of which there is no escape; a sordid nature swallows down the disgrace and survives it, the wise man drinks the hemlock and dies. Suppose that the remainder of life is to be one constant struggle with the gout which racks our bones, or with a gnawing and disfiguring cancer, the wise man dismisses quacks, and at the proper moment bids a last farewell to the friends whom he only saddens by his presence. Or another perhaps has fallen alive into the hands of the tyrant against whom he fought. What shall he do? The oath of allegiance is tendered to him; he must either subscribe or stretch out his neck to the executioner; the fool takes the latter course, the coward subscribes, the wise man strikes a last blow for liberty—in his own heart. 'You who are free,' the Stoic was wont to say, 'know then how to preserve your freedom! Find freedom from your own passions by sacrificing them to duty, freedom from the tyranny of mankind by pointing to the sword or the poison which will put you beyond their reach, freedom from the bondage of fate by determining the point beyond which you will endure it no longer, freedom of mind by shaking off the trammels of prejudice, and freedom from physical fear by learning how to subdue the gross instinct which causes so many wretches to cling to life.'

"After I had unearthed this reasoning from among a heap of ancient philosophical writings, I sought to reconcile it with Christian teaching. God has bestowed free-will upon us in order to require of us an account hereafter before the Throne of Judgment. 'I will plead my cause there!' I said to myself. But such thoughts as these led me to think of a life after death, and my old shaken beliefs rose up before me. Human life grows solemn when all eternity hangs upon the slightest of our decisions. When the full meaning of this thought is realized, the soul becomes conscious of something vast and mysterious within itself, by which it is drawn

towards the Infinite; the aspect of all things alters strangely. From this point of view life is something infinitely great and infinitely little. The consciousness of my sins had never made me think of heaven so long as hope remained to me on earth, so long as I could find a relief for my woes in work and in the society of other men. I had meant to make the happiness of a woman's life, to love, to be the head of a family, and in this way my need of expiation would have been satisfied to the full. This design had been thwarted, but yet another way had remained to me,—I would devote myself henceforward to my child. But after these two efforts had failed, and scorn and death had darkened my soul for ever, when all my feelings had been wounded and nothing was left to me here on earth, I raised my eyes to heaven, and beheld God.

"Yet still I tried to obtain the sanction of religion for my death. I went carefully through the Gospels, and found no passage in which suicide was forbidden; but during the reading, the divine thought of Christ, the Saviour of men, dawned in me. Certainly He had said nothing about the immortality of the soul, but He had spoken of the glorious kingdom of His Father; He had nowhere forbidden parricide, but He condemned all that was evil. The glory of His evangelists, and the proof of their divine mission, is not so much that they made laws for the world, but that they spread a new spirit abroad, and the new laws were filled with this new spirit. The very courage which a man displays in taking his own life seemed to me to be his condemnation; so long as he felt that he had within himself sufficient strength to die by his own hands, he ought to have had strength enough to continue the struggle. To refuse to suffer is a sign of weakness rather than of courage, and, moreover, was it not a sort of recusance to take leave of life in despondency, an abjuration of the Christian faith which is based upon the sublime words of Jesus Christ: 'Blessed are they that mourn.'

"So, in any case, suicide seemed to me to be an unpardonable error, even in the man who, through a false conception

of greatness of soul, takes his life a few moments before the executioner's axe falls. In humbling himself to the death of the cross, did not Jesus Christ set for us an example of obedience to all human laws, even when carried out unjustly? The word *resignation* engraved upon the cross, so clear to the eyes of those who can read the sacred characters in which it is traced, shone for me with divine brightness.

"I still had eighty thousand francs in my possession, and at first I meant to live a remote and solitary life, to vegetate in some country district for the rest of my days; but misanthropy is no Catholic virtue, and there is a certain vanity lurking beneath the hedgehog's skin of the misanthrope. His heart does not bleed, it shrivels, and my heart bled from every vein. I thought of the discipline of the Church, the refuge that she affords to sorrowing souls, understood at last the beauty of a life of prayer in solitude, and was fully determined to 'enter religion,' in the grand old phrase. So far my intentions were firmly fixed, but I had not yet decided on the best means of carrying them out. I realized the remains of my fortune, and set forth on my journey with an almost tranquil mind. *Peace in God* was a hope that could never fail me.

"I felt drawn to the rule of Saint Bruno, and made the journey to the Grande Chartreuse on foot, absorbed in solemn thoughts. That was a memorable day. I was not prepared for the grandeur of the scenery; the workings of an unknown Power greater than that of man were visible at every step, the overhanging crags, the precipices on either hand, the stillness only broken by the voices of the mountain streams, the sternness and wildness of the landscape, relieved here and there by Nature's fairest creations, pine trees that have stood for centuries and delicate rock plants at their feet, all combine to produce sober musings. There seemed to be no end to this waste solitude, shut in by its lofty mountain barriers. The idle curiosity of man could scarcely penetrate there. It

would be difficult to cross this melancholy desert of Saint Bruno's with a light heart.

"I saw the Grande Chartreuse. I walked beneath the vaulted roofs of the ancient cloisters, and heard in the silence the sound of the water from the spring, falling drop by drop. I entered a cell that I might the better realize my own utter nothingness, something of the peace that my predecessor had found there seemed to pass into my soul. An inscription, which in accordance with the custom of the monastery he had written above his door, impressed and touched me; all the precepts of the life that I meant to lead were there, summed up in three Latin words—*Fuge, late, tace.*"

Genestas bent his head as if he understood.

"My decision was made," Benassis resumed. "The cell with its deal wainscot, the hard bed, the solitude, all appealed to my soul. The Carthusians were in the chapel, I went thither to join in their prayers, and there my resolutions vanished. I do not wish to criticise the Catholic Church, I am perfectly orthodox, I believe in its laws and in the works it prescribes. But when I heard the chanting and the prayers of those old men, dead to the world and forgotten by the world, I discerned an undercurrent of sublime egoism in the life of the cloister. This withdrawal from the world could only benefit the individual soul, and after all what was it but a protracted suicide? I do not condemn it. The Church has opened these tombs in which life is buried; no doubt they are needful for those few Christians who are absolutely useless to the world; but for me, it would be better, I thought, to live among my fellows, to devote my life of expiation to their service.

"As I returned I thought long and carefully over the various ways in which I could carry out my vow of renunciation. Already I began, in fancy, to lead the life of a common sailor, condemning myself to serve our country in the lowest ranks, and giving up all my intellectual ambitions; but though it was a life of toil and of self-abnegation, it seemed to me that I ought to do more than this. Should I

not thwart the designs of God by leading such a life? If He had given me intellectual ability, was it not my duty to employ it for the good of my fellow-men? Then, besides, if I am to speak frankly, I felt within me a need of my fellow-men, an indescribable wish to help them. The round of mechanical duties and the routine tasks of the sailor afforded no scope for this desire, which is as much an outcome of my nature as the characteristic scent that a flower breathes forth.

"I was obliged to spend the night here, as I have already told you. The wretched condition of the countryside had filled me with pity, and during the night it seemed as if these thoughts had been sent to me by God, and that thus He had revealed His will to me. I had known something of the joys that pierce the heart, the happiness and the sorrow of motherhood; I determined that henceforth my life should be filled with these, but that mine should be a wider sphere than a mother's. I would expend her care and kindness on a whole district; I would be a sister of charity, and bind the wounds of all the suffering poor in a countryside. It seemed to me that the finger of God unmistakably pointed out my destiny; and when I remembered that my first serious thoughts in youth had inclined me to the study of medicine, I resolved to settle here as a doctor. Besides, I had another reason. *For a wounded heart—shadow and silence;* so I had written in my letter; and I meant to fulfil the vow which I had made to myself.

"So I have entered into the paths of silence and submission. The *fuge, late, tace* of the Carthusian brother is my motto here, my death to the world is the life of this canton, my prayer takes the form of the active work to which I have set my hand, and which I love—the work of sowing the seeds of happiness and joy, of giving to others what I myself have not.

"I have grown so used to this life, completely out of the world and among the peasants, that I am thoroughly transformed. Even my face is altered; it has been so continually

exposed to the sun, that it has grown wrinkled and weather-beaten. I have fallen into the habits of the peasants; I have assumed their dress, their ways of talking, their gait, their easy-going negligence, their utter indifference to appearances. My old acquaintances in Paris, or the she-coxcombs on whom I used to dance attendance, would be puzzled to recognize in me the man who had a certain vogue in his day, the sybarite accustomed to all the splendor, luxury, and finery of Paris. I have come to be absolutely indifferent to my surroundings, like all those who are possessed by one thought, and have only one object in view; for I have but one aim in life—to take leave of it as soon as possible. I do not want to hasten my end in any way; but some day, when illness comes, I shall lie down to die without regret.

"There, sir, you have the whole story of my life until I came here—told in all sincerity. I have not attempted to conceal any of my errors; they have been great, though others have erred as I have erred. I have suffered greatly, and I am suffering still, but I look beyond this life to a happy future which can only be reached through sorrow. And yet—for all my resignation, there are moments when my courage fails me. This very day I was almost overcome in your presence by inward anguish; you did not notice it, but——"

Genestas started in his chair.

"Yes, Captain Bluteau, you were with me at the time. Do you remember how, while we were putting little Jacques to bed, you pointed to the mattress on which Mother Colas sleeps? Well, you can imagine how painful it all was; I can never see any child without thinking of the dear child I have lost, and this little one was doomed to die! I can never see a child with indifferent eyes——"

Genestas turned pale.

"Yes, the sight of the little golden heads, the innocent beauty of children's faces always awakens memories of my sorrows, and the old anguish returns afresh. Now and then, too, there comes the intolerable thought that so many people here

should thank me for what little I can do for them, when all that I have done has been prompted by remorse. You alone, captain, know the secret of my life. If I had drawn my will to serve them from some purer source than the memory of my errors, I should be happy indeed! But then, too, there would have been nothing to tell you, and no story about myself."

V.

ELEGIES

As Benassis finished his story, he was struck by the troubled expression of the officer's face. It touched him to have been so well understood. He was almost ready to reproach himself for having distressed his visitor. He spoke:

"But these troubles of mine, Captain Bluteau——"

"Do not call me Captain Bluteau," cried Genestas, breaking in upon the doctor, and springing to his feet with sudden energy, a change of position that seemed to be prompted by inward dissatisfaction of some kind. "There is no such person as Captain Bluteau. . . . I am a scoundrel!"

With no little astonishment, Benassis beheld Genestas pacing to and fro in the salon, like a bumble-bee in quest of an exit from the room which he has incautiously entered.

"Then who are you, sir?" inquired Benassis.

"Ah! there now!" the officer answered, as he turned and took his stand before the doctor, though he lacked courage to look at his friend. "I have deceived you!" he went on (and there was a change in his voice). "I have acted a lie for the first time in my life, and I am well punished for it; for after this I cannot explain why I came here to play the spy upon you, confound it! Ever since I have had a glimpse of your soul, so to speak, I would far sooner have taken a box on the ear whenever I heard you call me Captain Bluteau! Perhaps you may forgive me for this subterfuge, but I shall never forgive myself; I, Pierre Joseph Genestas, who would not lie to save my life before a court-martial!"

"Are you Commandant Genestas?" cried Benassis, rising to his feet. He grasped the officer's hand warmly, and added: "As you said but a short time ago, sir, we were friends before

we knew each other. I have been very anxious to make your acquaintance, for I have often heard M. Gravier speak of you. He used to call you 'one of Plutarch's men.' "

"Plutarch? Nothing of the sort!" answered Genestas. "I am not worthy of you; I could thrash myself. I ought to have told you my secret in a straightforward way at the first. Yet no! It is quite as well that I wore a mask, and came here myself in search of information concerning you, for now I know that I must hold my tongue. If I had set about this business in the right fashion it would have been painful to you, and God forbid that I should give you the slightest annoyance."

"But I do not understand you, commandant."

"Let the matter drop. I am not ill; I have spent a pleasant day, and I will go back to-morrow. Whenever you come to Grenoble, you will find that you have one more friend there, who will be your friend through thick and thin. Pierre Joseph Genestas' sword and purse are at your disposal, and I am yours to the last drop of my blood. Well, after all, your words have fallen on good soil. When I am pensioned off, I will look for some out-of-the-way little place, and be mayor of it, and try to follow your example. I have not your knowledge, but I will study at any rate."

"You are right, sir; the landowner who spends his time in convincing a commune of the folly of some mistaken notion of agriculture, confers upon his country a benefit quite as great as any that the most skilful physician can bestow. The latter lessens the sufferings of some few individuals, and the former heals the wounds of his country. But you have excited my curiosity to no common degree. Is there really something in which I can be of use to you?"

"Of use?" repeated the commandant in an altered voice. "*Mon Dieu!* I was about to ask you to do me a service which is all but impossible, M. Benassis. Just listen a moment! I have killed a good many Christians in my time, it is true; but you may kill people and keep a good heart for all that; so there are some things that I can feel and understand, rough as I look."

"But go on!"

"No, I do not want to give you any pain if I can help it."

"Oh! commandant, I can bear a great deal."

"It is a question of a child's life, sir," said the officer, nervously.

Benassis suddenly knitted his brows, but by a gesture he entreated Genestas to continue.

"A child," repeated the commandant, "whose life may yet be saved by constant watchfulness and incessant care. Where could I expect to find a doctor capable of devoting himself to a single patient? Not in a town, that much was certain. I had heard you spoken of as an excellent man, but I wished to be quite sure that this reputation was well founded. So before putting my little charge into the hands of this M. Benassis of whom people spoke so highly, I wanted to study him myself. But now——"

"Enough," said the doctor; "so this child is yours?"

"No, no, M. Benassis. To clear up the mystery, I should have to tell you a long story, in which I do not exactly play the part of a hero; but you have given me your confidence, and I can readily give you mine."

"One moment, commandant," said the doctor. In answer to his summons, Jacquotte appeared at once, and her master ordered tea. "You see, commandant, at night when every one is sleeping, I do not sleep. . . . The thought of my troubles lies heavily on me, and then I try to forget them by taking tea. It produces a sort of nervous inebriation—a kind of slumber, without which I could not live. Do you still decline to take it?"

"For my own part," said Genestas, "I prefer your Hermitage."

"By all means. Jacquotte," said Benassis, turning to his housekeeper, "bring in some wine and biscuits. We will both of us have our night-cap after our separate fashions."

"That tea must be very bad for you!" Genestas remarked.

"It brings on horrid attacks of gout, but I cannot break myself of the habit, it is too soothing; it procures for me a

brief respite every night, a few moments during which life becomes less of a burden. . . . Come. I am listening; perhaps your story will efface the painful impressions left by the memories that I have just recalled."

Genestas set down his empty glass upon the chimney-piece. "After the Retreat from Moscow," he said, "my regiment was stationed to recruit for a while in a little town in Poland. We were quartered there, in fact, till the Emperor returned, and we bought up horses at long prices. So far so good. I ought to say that I had a friend in those days. More than once during the Retreat I had owed my life to him. He was a quartermaster, Renard by name; we could not but be like brothers (military discipline apart) after what he had done for me. They billeted us on the same house, a sort of shanty, a rat-hole of a place where a whole family lived, though you would not have thought there was room to stable a horse. This particular hovel belonged to some Jews who carried on their six-and-thirty trades in it. The frost had not so stiffened the old father Jew's fingers but that he could count gold fast enough; he had thriven uncommonly during our reverses. That sort of gentry lives in squalor and dies in gold.

"There were cellars underneath (lined with wood of course, the whole house was built of wood); they had stowed their children away down there, and one more particularly, a girl of seventeen, as handsome as a Jewess can be when she keeps herself tidy and has not fair hair. She was as white as snow, she had eyes like velvet, and dark lashes to them like rats' tails; her hair was so thick and glossy that it made you long to stroke it. She was perfection, and nothing less! I was the first to discover this curious arrangement. I was walking up and down outside one evening, smoking my pipe, after they thought I had gone to bed. The children came in helter-skelter, tumbling over one another like so many puppies. It was fun to watch them. Then they had supper with their father and mother. I strained my eyes to see the young Jewess through the clouds of smoke that her father blew

from his pipe; she looked like a new gold piece among a lot of copper coins.

"I had never reflected about love, my dear Benassis, I had never had time; but now at the sight of this young girl I lost my heart and head and everything else at once, and then it was plain to me that I had never been in love before. I was hard hit, and over head and ears in love. There I stayed smoking my pipe, absorbed in watching the Jewess until she blew out the candle and went to bed. I could not close my eyes. The whole night long I walked up and down the street smoking my pipe and refilling it from time to time. I had never felt like that before, and for the first and last time in my life I thought of marrying.

"At daybreak I saddled my horse and rode out into the country, to clear my head. I kept him at a trot for two mortal hours, and all but foundered the animal before I noticed it——"

Genestas stopped short, looked at his new friend uneasily, and said, "You must excuse me, Benassis, I am no orator; things come out just as they turn up in my mind. In a room full of fine folk I should feel awkward, but here in the country with you——"

"Go on," said the doctor.

"When I came back to my room I found Renard finely flustered. He thought I had fallen in a duel. He was cleaning his pistols, his head full of schemes for fastening a quarrel on any one who should have turned me off into the dark. . . . Oh! that was just the fellow's way! I confided my story to Renard, showed him the kennel where the children were; and, as my comrade understood the jargon that those heathens talked, I begged him to help me to lay my proposals before her father and mother, and to try to arrange some kind of communication between me and Judith. Judith they called her. In short, sir, for a fortnight the Jew and his wife so arranged matters that we supped every night with Judith, and for a fortnight I was the happiest of men. You understand and you know how it was, so I

shall not wear out your patience; still, if you do not smoke, you cannot imagine how pleasant it was to smoke a pipe at one's ease with Renard and the girl's father and one's princess there before one's eyes. Oh! yes, it was very pleasant!

"But I ought to tell you that Renard was a Parisian, and dependent on his father, a wholesale grocer, who had educated his son with a view to making a notary of him; so Renard had come by a certain amount of book learning before he had been drawn by the conscription and had to bid his desk good-bye. Add to this that he was the kind of man who looks well in a uniform, with a face like a girl's, and a thorough knowledge of the art of wheedling people. It was *he* whom Judith loved; she cared about as much for me as a horse cares for roast fowls. Whilst I was in the seventh heaven, soaring above the clouds at the bare sight of Judith, my friend Renard (who, as you see, fairly deserved his name) was making a way for himself underground. The traitor arrived at an understanding with the girl, and to such good purpose, that they were married forthwith after the custom of her country, without waiting for permission, which would have been too long in coming. He promised her, however, that if it should happen that the validity of this marriage was afterwards called in question, they were to be married again according to French law. As a matter of fact, as soon as she reached France, Mme. Renard became Mlle. Judith once more.

"If I had known all this, I would have killed Renard then and there, without giving him time to draw another breath; but the father, the mother, the girl herself, and the quartermaster were all in the plot like thieves in a fair. While I was smoking my pipe, and worshiping Judith as if she had been one of the saints above, the worthy Renard was arranging to meet her, and managing this piece of business very cleverly under my very eyes.

"You are the only person to whom I have told this story. A disgraceful thing, I call it. I have always asked myself how it is that a man who would die of shame if he took a

gold coin that did not belong to him, does not scruple to rob a friend of happiness and life and the woman he loves. My birds, in fact, were married and happy; and there was I, every evening at supper, moonstruck, gazing at Judith, responding like some fellow in a farce to the looks she threw at me in order to throw dust in my eyes. They have paid uncommonly dear for all this deceit, as you will certainly think. On my conscience, God pays more attention to what goes on in this world than some of us imagine.

"Down come the Russians upon us, the country is overrun, and the campaign of 1813 begins in earnest. One fine morning comes an order; we are to be on the battlefield of Lützen by a stated hour. The Emperor knew quite well what he was about when he ordered us to start at once. The Russians had turned our flank. Our colonel must needs get himself into a scrape, by choosing that moment to take leave of a Polish lady who lived outside the town, a quarter of a mile away; the Cossack advanced guard just caught him nicely, him and his picket. There was scarcely time to spring into our saddles and draw up before the town so as to engage in a cavalry skirmish. We must check the Russian advance if we meant to draw off during the night. Again and again we charged, and for three hours we did wonders. Under cover of the fighting the baggage and artillery set out. We had a park of artillery and great stores of powder, of which the Emperor stood in desperate need; they must reach him at all costs.

"Our resistance deceived the Russians, who thought at first that we were supported by an army corps; but before very long they learned their error from their scouts, and knew that they had only a single regiment of cavalry to deal with and the invalided foot soldiers in the depôt. On finding it out, sir, they made a murderous onslaught on us towards evening; the action was so hot that a good few of us were left on the field. We were completely surrounded. I was by Renard's side in the front rank, and I saw how my friend fought and charged like a demon; he was thinking of his

wife. Thanks to him, we managed to regain the town, which our invalids had put more or less in a state of defence, but it was pitiful to see it. We were the last to return—he and I. A body of Cossacks appeared in our way, and on this we rode in hot haste. One of the savages was about to run me through with a lance, when Renard, catching a sight of his manœuvre, thrust his horse between us to turn aside the blow; his poor brute, a fine animal it was upon my word, received the lance thrust and fell, bringing down both Renard and the Cossack with him. I killed the Cossack, seized Renard by the arm, and laid him crosswise before me on my horse like a sack of wheat.

" 'Good-bye, captain,' Renard said; 'it is all over with me.'

" 'Not yet,' I answered; 'I must have a look at you.' We had reached the town by that time; I dismounted, and propped him up on a little straw by the corner of a house. A wound in the head had laid open the brain, and yet he spoke! . . . Oh! he was a brave man.

" 'We are quits,' he said. 'I have given you my life, and I had taken Judith from you. Take care of her and of her child, if she had one. And not only so—you must marry her.'

"I left him then and there, sir, like a dog; when the first fury of anger left me, and I went back again—he was dead. The Cossacks had set fire to the town, and the thought of Judith then came to my mind. I went in search of her, took her up behind me in the saddle, and, thanks to my swift horse, caught up the regiment which was effecting its retreat. As for the Jew and his family, there was not one of them left, they had all disappeared like rats; there was no one but Judith in the house, waiting alone there for Renard. At first, as you can understand, I told her not a word of all that had happened.

"So it befell that all through the disastrous campaign of 1813 I had a woman to look after, to find quarters for her, and to see that she was comfortable. She scarcely knew, I think, the straits to which we were reduced. I was always careful to keep her ten leagues ahead of us as we drew back

I took her up behind me in the saddle



towards France. Her boy was born while we were fighting at Hanau. I was wounded in the engagement, and only rejoined Judith at Strasburg; then I returned to Paris, for, unluckily, I was laid up all through the campaign in France. If it had not been for that wretched mishap, I should have entered the Grenadier Guards, and then the Emperor would have promoted me. As it was, sir, I had three broken ribs and another man's wife and child to support! My pay, as you can imagine, was not exactly the wealth of the Indies. Renard's father, the toothless old shark, would have nothing to say to his daughter-in-law; and the old father Jew had made off. Judith was fretting herself to death. She cried one morning while she was dressing my wound.

"'Judith,' said I, 'your child has nothing in this world——'

"'Neither have I!' she said.

"'Pshaw!' I answered, 'we will send for all the necessary papers, I will marry you; and as for his child, I will look on him as mine——' I could not say any more.

"Ah, my dear sir, what would not one do for the look by which Judith thanked me—a look of thanks from dying eyes; I saw clearly that I had loved, and should love her always, and from that day her child found a place in my heart. She died, poor woman, while the father and mother Jews and the papers were on the way. The day before she died, she found strength enough to rise and dress herself for her wedding, to go through all the usual performance, and set her name to their pack of papers; then, when her child had a name and a father, she went back to her bed again; I kissed her hands and her forehead, and she died.

"That was my wedding. Two days later, when I had bought the few feet of earth in which the poor girl is laid, I found myself the father of an orphan child. I put him out to nurse during the campaign of 1815. Ever since that time, without letting any one know my story, which did not sound very well, I have looked after the little rogue as if he were my own child. I don't know what became of his grand-

father; he is wandering about, a ruined man, somewhere or other between Russia and Persia. The chances are that he may make a fortune some day, for he seemed to understand the trade in precious stones.

"I sent the child to school. I wanted him to take a good place at the École Polytechnique and to see him graduate there with credit, so of late I have had him drilled in mathematics to such good purpose that the poor little soul has been knocked up by it. He has a delicate chest. By all I can make out from the doctors in Paris, there would be some hope for him still if he were allowed to run wild among the hills, if he was properly cared for, and constantly looked after by somebody who was willing to undertake the task. So I thought of you, and I came here to take stock of your ideas and your ways of life. After what you have told me, I could not possibly cause you pain in this way, for we are good friends already."

"Commandant," said Benassis after a moment's pause, "bring Judith's child here to me. It is doubtless God's will to submit me to this final trial, and I will endure it. I will offer up these sufferings to God, whose Son died upon the cross. Besides, your story has awakened tender feelings; does not that augur well for me?"

Genestas took both of Benassis' hands and pressed them warmly, unable to check the tears that filled his eyes and coursed down his sunburnt face.

"Let us keep silence with regard to all this," he said.

"Yes, commandant. You are not drinking?"

"I am not thirsty," Genestas answered. "I am a perfect fool!"

"Well, when will you bring him to me?"

"Why, to-morrow, if you will let me. He has been at Grenoble these two days."

"Good! Set out to-morrow morning and come back again. I shall wait for you in La Fosseuse's cottage, and we will all four of us breakfast there together."

"Agreed," said Genestas, and the two friends as they went

upstairs bade each other good-night. When they reached the landing that lay between their rooms, Genestas set down his candle on the window ledge and turned towards Benassis.

"Tonnerre de Dieu!" he said, with outspoken enthusiasm; "I cannot let you go without telling you that you are the third among christened men to make me understand that there is Something up there," and he pointed to the sky.

The doctor's answer was a smile full of sadness and a cordial grasp of the hand that Genestas held out to him.

Before daybreak next morning Commandant Genestas was on his way. On his return, it was noon before he reached the spot on the highroad between Grenoble and the little town, where the pathway turned that led to La Fosseuse's cottage. He was seated in one of the light open cars with four wheels, drawn by one horse, that are in use everywhere on the roads in these hilly districts. Genestas' companion was a thin, delicate-looking lad, apparently about twelve years of age, though in reality he was in his sixteenth year. Before alighting, the officer looked round about him in several directions in search of a peasant who would take the carriage back to Benassis' house. It was impossible to drive to La Fosseuse's cottage, the pathway was too narrow. The park-keeper happened to appear upon the scene, and helped Genestas out of his difficulty, so that the officer and his adopted son were at liberty to follow the mountain footpath that led to the trysting-place.

"Would you not enjoy spending a year in running about in this lovely country, Adrien? Learning to hunt and to ride a horse, instead of growing pale over your books? Stay! look there!"

Adrien obediently glanced over the valley with languid indifference; like all lads of his age, he cared nothing for the beauty of natural scenery; so he only said, "You are very kind, father," without checking his walk.

The invalid listlessness of this answer went to Genestas' heart; he said no more to his son, and they reached La Fosseuse's house in silence.

"You are punctual, commandant!" cried Benassis, rising from the wooden bench where he was sitting.

But at the sight of Adrien he sat down again, and seemed for a while to be lost in thought. In a leisurely fashion he scanned the lad's sallow, weary face, not without admiring its delicate oval outlines, one of the most noticeable characteristics of a noble head. The lad was the living image of his mother. He had her olive complexion, beautiful black eyes with a sad and thoughtful expression in them, long hair, a head too energetic for the fragile body; all the peculiar beauty of the Polish Jewess had been transmitted to her son.

"Do you sleep soundly, my little man?" Benassis asked him.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see your knees; turn back your trousers."

Adrien reddened, unfastened his garters, and showed his knee to the doctor, who felt it carefully over.

"Good. Now speak; shout, shout as loud as you can." Adrien obeyed.

"That will do. Now give me your hands."

The lad held them out; white, soft, and blue-veined hands, like those of a woman.

"Where were you at school in Paris?"

"At Saint Louis."

"Did your master read his breviary during the night?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you did not go straight off to sleep?"

As Adrien made no answer to this, Genestas spoke. "The master is a worthy priest; he advised me to take my little rascal away on the score of his health," he told the doctor.

"Well," answered Benassis, with a clear, penetrating gaze into Adrien's frightened eyes, "there is a good chance. Oh, we shall make a man of him yet. We will live together like a pair of comrades, my boy! We will keep early hours. I mean to show this boy of yours how to ride a horse, commandant. He shall be put on a milk diet for a month or two, so as to get his digestion into order again, and then I will

take out a shooting license for him, and put him in Butifer's hands, and the two of them shall have some chamois-hunting. Give your son four or five months of out-door life, and you will not know him again, commandant! How delighted Butifer will be! I know the fellow; he will take you over into Switzerland, my young friend; haul you over the Alpine passes and up the mountain peaks, and add six inches to your height in six months; he will put some color into your cheeks and brace your nerves, and make you forget all these bad ways that you have fallen into at school. And after that you can go back to your work; and you will be a man some of these days. Butifer is an honest young fellow. We can trust him with the money necessary for traveling expenses and your hunting expeditions. The responsibility will keep him steady for six months, and that will be a very good thing for him."

Genestas' face brightened more and more at every word the doctor spoke.

"Now, let us go in to breakfast. La Fosseuse is very anxious to see you," said Benassis, giving Adrien a gentle tap on the cheek.

Genestas took the doctor's arm and drew him a little aside. "Then he is not consumptive after all?" he asked.

"No more than you or I."

"Then what is the matter with him?"

"Pshaw!" answered Benassis; "he is a little run down, that is all."

La Fosseuse appeared on the threshold of the door, and Genestas noticed, not without surprise, her simple but coquettish costume. This was not the peasant girl of yesterday evening, but a graceful and well-dressed Parisian woman, against whose glances he felt that he was not proof. The soldier turned his eyes on the table, which was made of walnut wood. There was no tablecloth, but the surface might have been varnished, it was so well rubbed and polished. Eggs, butter, a rice pudding, and fragrant wild strawberries had been set out, and the poor child had put flowers every-

where about the room; evidently it was a great day for her. At the sight of all this, the commandant could not help looking enviously at the little house and the green sward about it, and watched the peasant girl with an air that expressed both his doubts and his hopes. Then his eyes fell on Adrien, with whom La Fosseuse was deliberately busying herself, and handing him the eggs.

"Now, commandant," said Benassis, "you know the terms on which you are receiving hospitality. You must tell La Fosseuse 'something about the army.' "

"But let the gentleman first have his breakfast in peace, and then, after he has taken a cup of coffee——"

"By all means, I shall be very glad," answered the commandant; "but it must be upon one condition, you will tell us the story of some adventure in your past life, will you not, mademoiselle?"

"Why, nothing worth telling has ever happened to me, sir," she answered, as her color rose. "Will you take a little more rice pudding?" she added, as she saw that Adrien's plate was empty.

"If you please, mademoiselle."

"The pudding is delicious," said Genestas.

"Then what will you say to her coffee and cream?" cried Benassis.

"I would rather hear our pretty hostess talk."

"You did not put that nicely, Genestas," said Benassis. He took La Fosseuse's hand in his and pressed it as he went on: "Listen, my child; there is a kind heart hidden away beneath that officer's stern exterior, and you can talk freely before him. We do not want to press you to talk, do not tell us anything unless you like; but if ever you can be listened to and understood, poor little one, it will be by the three who are with you now at this moment. Tell us all about your love affairs in the old days, that will not admit us into any of the real secrets of your heart."

"Here is Mariette with the coffee," she answered, "and as soon as you are all served, I will tell about my 'love af-

fairs' very willingly. But M. le Commandant will not forget his promise?" she added, challenging the officer with a shy glance.

"That would be impossible, mademoiselle," Genestas answered respectfully.

"When I was sixteen years old," La Fosseuse began, "I had to beg my bread on the roadside in Savoy, though my health was very bad. I used to sleep at Échelles, in a manger full of straw. The innkeeper who gave me shelter was kind, but his wife could not abide me, and was always saying hard things. I used to feel very miserable; for though I was a beggar, I was not a naughty child; I used to say my prayers every night and morning, I never stole anything, and I did as Heaven bade me in begging for my living, for there was nothing that I could turn my hands to, and I was really unfit for work—quite unable to handle a hoe or to wind spools of cotton.

"Well, they drove me away from the inn at last; a dog was the cause of it all. I had neither father nor mother nor friends. I had met with no one, ever since I was born, whose eyes had any kindness in them for me. Morin, the old woman who had brought me up, was dead. She had been very good to me, but I cannot remember that she ever petted me much; besides, she worked out in the fields like a man, poor thing; and if she fondled me at times, she also used to rap my fingers with the spoon if I ate the soup too fast out of the porringer we had between us. Poor old woman, never a day passes but I remember her in my prayers! If it might please God to let her live a happier life up there than she did here below! And, above all things, if she might only lie a little softer there, for she was always grumbling about the pallet-bed that we both used to sleep upon. You could not possibly imagine how it hurts one's soul to be repulsed by every one, to receive nothing but hard words and looks that cut you to the heart, just as if they were so many stabs of a knife. I have known poor old people who were so used to these things that they did not mind them a bit, but I was

not born for that sort of life. A 'No' always made me cry. Every evening I came back again more unhappy than ever, and only felt comforted when I had said my prayers. In all God's world, in fact, there was not a soul to care for me, no one to whom I could pour out my heart. My only friend was the blue sky. I have always been happy when there was a cloudless sky above my head. I used to lie and watch the weather from some nook among the crags when the wind had swept the clouds away. At such times I used to dream that I was a great lady. I used to gaze into the sky till I felt myself bathed in the blue; I lived up there in thought, rising higher and higher yet, till my troubles weighed on me no more, and there was nothing but gladness left.

"But to return to my 'love affairs.' I must tell you that the innkeeper's spaniel had a dear little puppy, just as sensible as a human being; he was quite white, with black spots on his paws, a cherub of a puppy! I can see him yet. Poor little fellow, he was the only creature who ever gave me a friendly look in those days; I kept all my tidbits for him. He knew me, and came to look for me every evening. How he used to spring up at me! And he would bite my feet, he was not ashamed of my poverty; there was something so grateful and so kind in his eyes that it brought tears into mine to see it. 'That is the one living creature that really cares for me!' I used to say. He slept at my feet that winter. It hurt me so much to see him beaten, that I broke him of the habit of going into houses, to steal bones, and he was quite contented with my crusts. When I was unhappy, he used to come and stand in front of me, and look into my eyes; it was just as if he said, 'So you are sad, my poor Fosseuse?'

"If a traveler threw me some halfpence, he would pick them up out of the dust and bring them to me, clever little spaniel that he was! I was less miserable so long as I had that friend. Every day I put away a few halfpence, for I wanted to get fifteen francs together, so that I might buy him of Père Manseau. One day his wife saw that the dog

was fond of me, so she herself took a sudden violent fancy to him. The dog, mind you, could not bear her. Oh, animals know people by instinct! If you really care for them, they find it out in a moment. I had a gold coin, a twenty-franc piece, sewed into the band of my skirt; so I spoke to M. Manseau: 'Dear sir, I meant to offer you my year's savings for your dog; but now your wife has a mind to keep him, although she cares very little about him, and rather than that, will you sell him to me for twenty francs? Look, I have the money here.'

"'No, no, little woman,' he said; 'put up your twenty francs. Heaven forbid that I should take their money from the poor! Keep the dog; and if my wife makes a fuss about it, you must go away.'

"His wife made a terrible to-do about the dog. Ah! *mon Dieu!* any one might have thought the house was on fire! You never would guess the notion that next came into her head. She saw that the little fellow looked on me as his mistress, and that she could only have him against his will, so she had him poisoned; and my poor spaniel died in my arms. . . . I cried over him as if he had been my child, and buried him under a pine-tree. You do not know all that I laid in that grave. As I sat there beside it, I told myself that henceforward I should always be alone in the world; that I had nothing left to hope for; that I should be again as I had been before, a poor lonely girl; that I should never more see a friendly light in any eyes. I stayed out there all through the night, praying God to have pity on me. When I went back to the highroad I saw a poor little child, about ten years old, who had no hands.

"'God has heard me,' I thought. I had prayed that night as I had never prayed before. 'I will take care of the poor little one; we will beg together, and I will be a mother to him. Two of us ought to do better than one; perhaps I shall have more courage for him than I have for myself.'

"At first the little boy seemed to be quite happy, and, indeed, he would have been hard to please if he had not been

content. I did everything that he wanted, and gave him the best of all that I had; I was his slave in fact, and he tyrannized over me, but that was nicer than being alone, I used to think! Pshaw! no sooner did the little good-for-nothing know that I carried a twenty-franc piece sewed into my skirt-band than he cut the stitches, and stole my gold coin, the price of my poor spaniel! I had meant to have masses said with it. . . . A child without hands, too! Oh, it makes one shudder! Somehow that theft took all the heart out of me. It seemed as if I was to love nothing but it should come to some wretched end..

"One day at Échelles, I watched a fine carriage coming slowly up the hillside. There was a young lady, as beautiful as the Virgin Mary, in the carriage, and a young man, who looked like the young lady. 'Just look,' he said; 'there is a pretty girl!' and he flung a silver coin to me.

"No one but you, M. Benassis, could understand how pleased I was with the compliment, the first that I had ever had; but, indeed, the gentleman ought not to have thrown the money to me. I was all in a flutter; I knew of a short cut, a footpath among the rocks, and started at once to run, so that I reached the summit of the Échelles long before the carriage, which was coming up very slowly. I saw the young man again; he was quite surprised to find me there; and as for me, I was so pleased that my heart seemed to be throbbing in my throat. Some kind of instinct drew me towards him. After he had recognized me, I went on my way again; I felt quite sure that he and the young lady with him would leave the carriage to see the waterfall at Couz, and so they did. When they had alighted, they saw me once more, under the walnut-trees by the wayside. They asked me many questions, and seemed to take an interest in what I told them about myself. In all my life I had never heard such pleasant voices as they had, that handsome young man and his sister, for she was his sister, I am sure. I thought about them for a whole year afterwards, and kept on hoping that they would come back. I would have given two years of my

life only to see that traveler again, he looked so nice. Until I knew M. Benassis these were the greatest events of my life. Although my mistress turned me away for trying on that horrid ball-dress of hers, I was sorry for her, and I have forgiven her; for, candidly, if you will give me leave to say so, I thought myself the better woman of the two, countess though she was."

"Well," said Genestas, after a moment's pause, "you see that Providence has kept a friendly eye on you, you are in clover here."

At these words La Fosseuse looked at Benassis with eyes full of gratitude.

"Would that I was rich!" came from Genestas. The officer's exclamation was followed by profound silence.

"You owe me a story," said La Fosseuse at last, in coaxing tones.

"I will tell it at once," answered Genestas. "On the evening before the battle of Friedland," he went on, after a moment, "I had been sent with a despatch to General Davoust's quarters, and I was on the way back to my own, when at a turn in the road I found myself face to face with the Emperor. Napoleon gave me a look.

"'You are Captain Genestas, are you not?' he said.

"'Yes, your Majesty.'

"'You were out in Egypt?'

"'Yes, your Majesty.'

"'You had better not keep to the road you are on,' he said; 'turn to the left, you will reach your division sooner that way.'

"That was what the Emperor said, but you would never imagine how kindly he said it; and he had so many irons in the fire just then, for he was riding about surveying the position of the field. I am telling you this story to show you what a memory he had, and so that you may know that he knew my face. I took the oath in 1815. But for that mistake, perhaps I might have been a colonel to-day; I never meant to betray the Bourbons, France must be defended,

and that was all I thought about. I was a Major in the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard; and although my wound still gave me trouble, I swung a sabre in the battle of Waterloo. When it was all over, and Napoleon returned to Paris, I went too; then when he reached Rochefort, I followed him against his orders; it was some sort of comfort to watch over him and to see that no mishap befell him on the way. So when he was walking along the beach he turned and saw me on duty ten paces from him.

"'Well, Genestas,' he said, as he came towards me, 'so we are not yet dead, either of us?'

"It cut me to the heart to hear him say that. If you had heard him, you would have shuddered from head to foot, as I did. He pointed to the villainous English vessel that was keeping the entrance to the harbor. 'When I see *that,*' he said, 'and think of my Guard, I wish that I had perished in that torrent of blood.'

"Yes," said Genestas, looking at the doctor and at La Fosseuse, "those were his very words.

"'The generals who counseled you not to charge with the Guard, and who hurried you into your traveling carriage, were no true friends of yours,' I said.

"'Come with me,' he cried eagerly, 'the game is not ended yet.'

"'I would gladly go with your Majesty, but I am not free; I have a motherless child on my hands just now.'

"And so it happened that Adrien over there prevented me from going to St. Helena.

"'Stay,' he said, 'I have never given you anything. You are not one of those who fill one hand and then hold out the other. Here is the snuff-box that I have used through this last campaign. And stay on in France; after all, brave men are wanted there! Remain in the service, and keep me in remembrance. Of all my army in Egypt, you are the last that I have seen still on his legs in France.' And he gave me a little snuff-box.

"'Have "*Honneur et patrie*" engraved on it,' he said; 'the

history of our last two campaigns is summed up in those three words.'

"Then those who were going out with him came up, and I spent the rest of the morning with them. The Emperor walked to and fro along the beach; there was not a sign of agitation about him, though he frowned from time to time. At noon, it was considered hopeless for him to attempt to escape by sea. The English had found out that he was at Rochefort; he must either give himself up to them, or cross the breadth of France again. We were wretchedly anxious; the minutes seemed like hours! On the one hand there were the Bourbons, who would have shot Napoleon if he had fallen into their clutches; and on the other, the English, a dishonored race, they covered themselves with shame by flinging a foe who asked for hospitality away on a desert rock, that is a stain which they will never wash away. Whilst we were anxiously debating, some one or other among his suite presented a sailor to him, a Lieutenant Doret, who had a scheme for reaching America to lay before him. As a matter of fact, a brig from the States and a merchant vessel were lying in the harbor.

"'But how could you set about it, captain?' the Emperor asked him.

"'You will be on board the merchant vessel, Sire,' the man answered. 'I will run up the white flag and man the brig with a few devoted followers. We will tackle the English vessel, set fire to her, and board her, and you will get clear away.'

"'We will go with you!' I cried to the captain. But Napoleon looked at us and said, 'Captain Doret, keep yourself for France.'

"It was the only time I ever saw Napoleon show any emotion. With a wave of his hand to us he went in again. I watched him go on board the English vessel, and then I went away. It was all over with him, and he knew it. There was a traitor in the harbor, who by means of signals gave warning to the Emperor's enemies of his presence. Then Napoleon fell back on a last resource; he did as he had been wont

to do on the battlefield, he went to his foes instead of letting them come to him. Talk of troubles! No words could ever make you understand the misery of those who loved him for his own sake."

"But where is his snuff-box?" asked La Fosseuse.

"It is in a box at Grenoble," the commandant replied.

"I will go over to see it, if you will let me. To think that you have something in your possession that his fingers have touched! . . . Had he a well-shaped hand?"

"Very."

"Can it be true that he is dead? Come, tell me the real truth?"

"Yes, my dear child, he is dead; there is no doubt about it."

"I was such a little girl in 1815. I was not tall enough to see anything but his hat, and even so I was nearly crushed to death in the crowd at Grenoble."

"Your coffee and cream is very nice indeed," said Genestas. "Well, Adrien, how do you like this country? Will you come here to see mademoiselle?"

The boy made no answer; he seemed afraid to look at La Fosseuse. Benassis never took his eyes off Adrien; he appeared to be reading the lad's very soul.

"Of course he will come to see her," said Benassis. "But let us go home again, I have a pretty long round to make, and I shall want a horse. I daresay you and Jacquotte will manage to get on together whilst I am away."

"Will you not come with us?" said Genestas to La Fosseuse.

"Willingly," she answered; "I have a lot of things to take over for Mme. Jacquotte."

They started out for the doctor's house. Her visitors had raised La Fosseuse's spirits; she led the way along narrow tracks, through the loneliest parts of the hills.

"You have told us nothing about yourself, Monsieur l'Officier," she said. "I should have liked to hear you tell us about some adventure in the wars. I liked what you told

us about Napoleon very much, but it made me feel sad. . . . If you would be so very kind——"

"Quite right!" Benassis exclaimed. "You ought to tell us about some thrilling adventure during our walk. Come, now, something really interesting like that business of the beam in the Beresina!"

"So few of my recollections are worth telling," said Genestas. "Some people come in for all kinds of adventures, but I have never managed to be the hero of any story. Oh! stop a bit though, a funny thing did once happen to me. I was with the Grand Army in 1805, and so, of course, I was at Austerlitz. There was a good deal of skirmishing just before Ulm surrendered, which kept the cavalry pretty fully occupied. Moreover, we were under the command of Murat, who never let the grass grow under his feet.

"I was still only a sub-lieutenant in those days. It was just at the opening of the campaign, and after one of these affairs, that we took possession of a district in which there were a good many fine estates; so it fell out that one evening my regiment bivouacked in a park belonging to a handsome château where a countess lived, a young and pretty woman she was. Of course, I meant to lodge in the house, and I hurried there to put a stop to pillage of any sort. I came into the salon just as my quartermaster was pointing his carbine at the countess, his brutal way of asking for what she certainly could not give the ugly scoundrel. I struck up his carbine with my sword, the bullet went through a looking-glass on the wall, then I dealt my gentleman a backhanded blow that stretched him on the floor. The sound of the shot and the cries of the countess fetched all her people on the scene, and it was my turn to be in danger.

" 'Stop!' she cried in German (for they were going to run me through the body), 'this officer has saved my life!'

"They drew back at that. The lady gave me her handkerchief (a fine embroidered handkerchief, which I have yet), telling me that her house would always be open to me, and that I should always find a sister and a devoted friend in her,

if at any time I should be in any sort of trouble. In short, she did not know how to make enough of me. She was as fair as a wedding morning and as charming as a kitten. We had dinner together. Next day I was distractedly in love, but next day I had to be in my place at Güntzburg, or wherever it was. There was no help for it, I had to turn out, and started off with my handkerchief.

"Well, we gave them battle, and all the time I kept on saying to myself, 'I wish a bullet would come my way! *Mon Dieu!* they are flying thick enough!'

"I had no wish for a ball in the thigh, for I should have had to stop where I was in that case, and there would have been no going back to the château, but I was not particular; a nice wound in the arm I should have liked best, so that I might be nursed and made much of by the princess. I flung myself on the enemy, like mad; but I had no sort of luck, and came out of the action quite safe and sound. We must march, and there was an end of it; I never saw the countess again, and there is the whole story."

By this time they had reached Benassis' house; the doctor mounted his horse at once and disappeared. Genestas recommended his son to Jacquotte's care, so the doctor on his return found that she had taken Adrien completely under her wing, and had installed him in M. Gravier's celebrated room. With no small astonishment, she heard her master's order to put up a simple camp-bed in his own room, for that the lad was to sleep there, and this in such an authoritative tone, that for once in her life Jacquotte found not a single word to say.

After dinner the commandant went back to Grenoble. Benassis' reiterated assurances that the lad would soon be restored to health had taken a weight off his mind.

Eight months later, in the earliest days of the following December, Genestas was appointed to be lieutenant-colonel of a regiment stationed at Poitiers. He was just thinking of writing to Benassis to tell him of the journey he was about

to take, when a letter came from the doctor. His friend told him that Adrien was once more in sound health.

"The boy has grown strong and tall," he said; "and he is wonderfully well. He has profited by Butifer's instruction since you saw him last, and is now as good a shot as our smuggler himself. He has grown brisk and active too; he is a good walker, and rides well; he is not in the least like the lad of sixteen who looked like a boy of twelve eight months ago; any one might think he was twenty years old. There is an air of self-reliance and independence about him. In fact, he is a man now, and you must begin to think about his future at once."

"I shall go over to Benassis to-morrow, of course," said Genestas to himself, "and I will see what he says before I make up my mind what to do with that fellow," and with that he went to a farewell dinner given to him by his brother officers. He would be leaving Grenoble now in a very few days.

As the lieutenant-colonel returned after the dinner, his servant handed him a letter. It had been brought by a messenger, he said, who had waited a long while for an answer.

Genestas recognized Adrien's handwriting, although his head was swimming after the toasts that had been drunk in his honor; probably, he thought, the letter merely contained a request to gratify some boyish whim, so he left it unopened on the table. The next morning, when the fumes of champagne had passed off, he took it up and began to read.

"My dear father——"

"Oh! you young rogue," was his comment, "you know how to coax whenever you want something."

"Our dear M. Benassis is dead——"

The letter dropped from Genestas' hands; it was some time before he could read any more.

"Every one is in consternation. The trouble is all the

greater because it came as a sudden shock. It was so unexpected. M. Benassis seemed perfectly well the day before; there was not a sign of ill-health about him. Only the day before yesterday he went to see all his patients, even those who lived farthest away; it was as if he had known what was going to happen; and he spoke to every one whom he met, saying, 'Good-bye, my friends,' each time. Towards five o'clock he came back just as usual to have dinner with me. He was tired; Jacquotte noticed the purplish flush on his face, but the weather was so very cold that she would not get ready a warm foot-bath for him, as she usually did when she saw that the blood had gone to his head. So she has been wailing, poor thing, through her tears for these two days past, 'If I had *only* given him a foot-bath, he would be living now!'

"M. Benassis was hungry; he made a good dinner. I thought he was in higher spirits than usual; we both of us laughed a great deal, I had never seen him laugh so much before. After dinner, towards seven o'clock, a man came with a message from Saint Laurent du Pont; it was a serious case, and M. Benassis was urgently needed. He said to me, 'I shall have to go, though I never care to set out on horseback when I have hardly digested my dinner, more especially when it is as cold as this. It is enough to kill a man!'

"For all that, he went. At nine o'clock the postman, Goguelat, brought a letter for M. Benassis. Jacquotte was tired out, for it was her washing-day. She gave me the letter and went off to bed. She begged me to keep a good fire in our bedroom, and to have some tea ready for M. Benassis when he came in, for I am still sleeping in the little cot-bed in his room. I raked out the fire in the salon, and went upstairs to wait for my good friend. I looked at the letter, out of curiosity, before I laid it on the chimney-piece, and noticed the handwriting and the postmark. It came from Paris, and I think it was a lady's hand. I am telling you about it because of things that happened afterwards.

"About ten o'clock, I heard the horse returning, and M.

Benassis' voice. He said to Nicolle, 'It is cold enough tonight to bring the wolves out. I do not feel at all well.' Nicolle said, 'Shall I go up and wake Jacquotte?' And M. Benassis answered, 'Oh! no, no,' and came upstairs.

"I said, 'I have your tea here, all ready for you,' and he smiled at me in the way that you know, and said, 'Thank you, Adrien.' That was his last smile. In a moment he began to take off his cravat, as though he could not breathe. 'How hot it is in here!' he said, and flung himself down in an armchair. 'A letter has come for you, my good friend,' I said; 'here it is;' and I gave him the letter. He took it up and glanced at the handwriting. 'Ah! *mon Dieu!*' he exclaimed, 'perhaps she is free at last!' Then his head sank back, and his hands shook. After a little while he set the lamp on the table and opened the letter. There was something so alarming in the cry he had given that I watched him while he read, and saw that his face was flushed, and there were tears in his eyes. Then quite suddenly he fell, head forwards. I tried to raise him, and saw how purple his face was.

"'It is all over with me,' he said, stammering; it was terrible to see how he struggled to rise. 'I must be bled; bleed me!' he cried, clutching my hand. . . . 'Adrien,' he said again, 'burn this letter!' He gave it to me, and I threw it on the fire. I called for Jacquotte and Nicolle. Jacquotte did not hear me, but Nicolle did, and came hurrying upstairs; he helped me to lay M. Benassis on my little bed. Our dear friend could not hear us any longer when we spoke to him, and although his eyes were open, he did not see anything. Nicolle galloped off at once to fetch the surgeon, M. Bordier, and in this way spread alarm through the town. It was all astir in a moment. M. Janvier, M. Dufau, and all the rest of your acquaintance were the first to come to us. But all hope was at an end, M. Benassis was dying fast. He gave no sign of consciousness, not even when M. Bordier cauterized the soles of his feet. It was an attack of gout, combined with an apoplectic stroke.

"I am giving you all these details, dear father, because I know how much you cared for him. As for me, I am very sad and full of grief, for I can say to you that I cared more for him than for any one else except you. I learned more from M. Benassis' talk in the evenings than ever I could have learned at school.

"You cannot imagine the scene next morning when the news of his death was known in the place. The garden and the yard here were filled with people. How they sobbed and wailed! Nobody did any work that day. Every one recalled the last time that they had seen M. Benassis, and what he had said, or they talked of all that he had done for them; and those who were least overcome with grief spoke for the others. Every one wanted to see him once more, and the crowd grew larger every moment. The sad news traveled so fast that men and women and children came from ten leagues round; all the people in the district, and even beyond it, had that one thought in their minds.

"It was arranged that four of the oldest men of the commune should carry the coffin. It was a very difficult task for them, for the crowd was so dense between the church and M. Benassis' house. There must have been nearly five thousand people there, and almost every one knelt as if the Host were passing. There was not nearly room for them in the church. In spite of their grief, the crowd was so silent that you could hear the sound of the bell during mass and the chanting as far as the end of the High Street; but when the procession started again for the new cemetery, which M. Benassis had given to the town, little thinking, poor man, that he himself would be the first to be buried there, a great cry went up. M. Janvier wept as he said the prayers; there were no dry eyes among the crowd. And so we buried him.

"As night came on the people dispersed, carrying sorrow and mourning everywhere with them. The next day Gondrin and Goguelat, and Butifer, with others, set to work to raise a sort of pyramid of earth, twenty feet high, above the spot where M. Benassis lies; it is being covered now with green

sods, and every one is helping them. These things, dear father, have all happened in three days.

"M. Dufau found M. Benassis' will lying open on the table where he used to write. When it was known how his property had been left, affection for him and regret for his loss became even deeper if possible. And now, dear father, I am waiting for Butifer (who is taking this letter to you) to come back with your answer. You must tell me what I am to do. Will you come to fetch me, or shall I go to you at Grenoble? Tell me what you wish me to do, and be sure that I shall obey you in everything.

"Farewell, dear father, I send my love, and I am your affectionate son, ADRIEN GENESTAS."

"Ah! well, I must go over," the soldier exclaimed.

He ordered his horse and started out. It was one of those still December mornings when the sky is covered with gray clouds. The wind was too light to disperse the thick fog, through which the bare trees and damp house fronts seemed strangely unfamiliar. The very silence was gloomy. There is such a thing as a silence full of light and gladness; on a bright day there is a certain joyousness about the slightest sound, but in such dreary weather nature is not silent, she is dumb. All sounds seemed to die away, stifled by the heavy air.

There was something in the gloom without him that harmonized with Colonel Genestas' mood; his heart was oppressed with grief, and thoughts of death filled his mind. Involuntarily he began to think of the cloudless sky on that lovely spring morning, and remembered how bright the valley had looked when he passed through it for the first time; and now, in strong contrast with that day, the heavy sky above him was a leaden gray, there was no greenness about the hills, which were still waiting for the cloak of winter snow that invests them with a certain beauty of its own. There was something painful in all this bleak and bare desolation for a man who was traveling to find a grave at his journey's end;

the thought of that grave haunted him. The lines of dark pine-trees here and there along the mountain ridges against the sky seized on his imagination; they were in keeping with the officer's mournful musings. Every time that he looked over the valley that lay before him, he could not help thinking of the trouble that had befallen the canton, of the man who had died so lately, and of the blank left by his death.

Before long, Genestas reached the cottage where he had asked for a cup of milk on his first journey. The sight of the smoke rising above the hovel where the charity-children were being brought up recalled vivid memories of Benassis and of his kindness of heart. The officer made up his mind to call there. He would give some alms to the poor woman for his dead friend's sake. He tied his horse to a tree, and opened the door of the hut without knocking.

"Good-day, mother," he said, addressing the old woman, who was sitting by the fire with the little ones crouching at her side. "Do you remember me?"

"Oh! quite well, sir! You came here one fine morning last spring and gave us two crowns."

"There, mother! that is for you and the children."

"Thank you kindly, sir. May Heaven bless you!"

"You must not thank me, mother," said the officer; "it is all through M. Benassis that the money has come to you."

The old woman raised her eyes and gazed at Genestas.

"Ah! sir," she said, "he has left his property to our poor countryside, and made all of us his heirs; but we have lost him who was worth more than all, for it was he who made everything turn out well for us."

"Good-bye, mother! Pray for him," said Genestas, making a few playful cuts at the children with his riding-whip.

The old woman and her little charges went out with him; they watched him mount his horse and ride away.

He followed the road along the valley until he reached the bridle-path that led to La Fosseuse's cottage. From the slope above the house he saw that the door was fastened and the shutters closed. In some anxiety he returned to the high-

way, and rode on under the poplars, now bare and leafless. Before long he overtook the old laborer, who was dressed in his Sunday best, and creeping slowly along the road. There was no bag of tools on his shoulder.

"Good-day, old Moreau!"

"Ah! good-day, sir. . . . I mind who you are now!" the old fellow exclaimed after a moment. "You are a friend of monsieur, our late mayor! Ah! sir, would it not have been far better if God had only taken a poor rheumatic old creature like me instead? It would not have mattered if He had taken me, but *he* was the light of our eyes."

"Do you know how it is that there is no one at home up there at La Fosseuse's cottage?"

The old man gave a look at the sky.

"What time is it, sir? The sun has not shone all day," he said.

"It is ten o'clock."

"Oh! well, then, she will have gone to mass or else to the cemetery. She goes there every day. He has left her five hundred livres a year and her house for as long as she lives, but his death has fairly turned her brain, as you may say——"

"And where are you going, old Moreau?"

"Little Jacques is to be buried to-day, and I am going to the funeral. He was my nephew, poor little chap; he had been ailing a long while, and he died yesterday morning. It really looked as though it was M. Benassis who kept him alive. That is the way! All these younger ones die!" Moreau added, half-jestingly, half-sadly.

Genestas reined in his horse as he entered the town, for he met Gondrin and Goguelat, each carrying a pickaxe and shovel. He called to them, "Well, old comrades, we have had the misfortune to lose him——"

"There, there, that is enough, sir!" interrupted Goguelat, "we know that well enough. We have just been cutting turf to cover his grave."

"His life will make a grand story to tell, eh?"

"Yes," answered Goguelat, "he was the Napoleon of our valley, barring the battles."

As they reached the parsonage, Genestas saw a little group about the door; Butifer and Adrien were talking with M. Janvier, who, no doubt, had just returned from saying mass. Seeing that the officer made as though he were about to dismount, Butifer promptly went to hold the horse, while Adrien sprang forward and flung his arms about his father's neck. Genestas was deeply touched by the boy's affection, though no sign of this appeared in the soldier's words or manner.

"Why, Adrien," he said, "you certainly are set up again. My goodness! Thanks to our poor friend, you have almost grown into a man. I shall not forget your tutor here, Master Butifer."

"Oh! colonel," entreated Butifer, "take me away from here and put me into your regiment. I cannot trust myself now that M. le Maire is gone. *He* wanted me to go for a soldier, didn't he? Well, then, I will do what he wished. He told you all about me, and you will not be hard on me, will you, M. Genestas?"

"Right, my fine fellow," said Genestas, as he struck his hand in the other's "I will find something to suit you, set your mind at rest—— And how is it with you, M. le Curé?"

"Well, like every one else in the canton, colonel, I feel sorrow for his loss, but no one knows as I do how irreparable it is. He was like an angel of God among us. Fortunately, he did not suffer at all; it was a painless death. The hand of God gently loosed the bonds of a life that was one continual blessing to us all."

"Will it be intrusive if I ask you to accompany me to the cemetery? I should like to bid him farewell, as it were."

Genestas and the curé, still in conversation, walked on together. Butifer and Adrien followed them at a few paces distance. They went in the direction of the little lake, and as soon as they were clear of the town, the lieutenant-colonel

saw on the mountain-side a large piece of waste land enclosed by walls.

"That is the cemetery," the curé told him. "He is the first to be buried in it. Only three months before he was brought here, it struck him that it was a very bad arrangement to have the churchyard round the church; so, in order to carry out the law, which prescribes that burial grounds should be removed to a stated distance from human dwellings, he himself gave this piece of land to the commune. We are burying a child, poor little thing, in the new cemetery to-day, so we shall have begun by laying innocence and virtue there. Can it be that death is after all a reward? Did God mean it as a lesson for us when He took these two perfect natures to Himself? When we have been tried and disciplined in youth by pain, in later life by mental suffering, are we so much nearer to Him? Look! there is the rustic monument which has been erected to his memory."

Genestas saw a mound of earth about twenty feet high. It was bare as yet, but dwellers in the district were already busily covering the sloping sides with green turf. La Fosseuse, her face buried in her hands, was sobbing bitterly; she was sitting on the pile of stones in which they had planted a great wooden cross, made from the trunk of a pine-tree, from which the bark had not been removed. The officer read the inscription; the letters were large, and had been deeply cut in the wood.

D. O. M.

HERE LIES

THE GOOD MONSIEUR BENASSIS

THE FATHER OF US ALL

PRAY FOR HIM.

"Was it you, sir," asked Genestas, "who——?"

"No," answered the curé; "it is simply what is said everywhere, from the heights up there above us down to Grenoble, so the words have been carved here."

Genestas remained silent for a few moments. Then he moved from where he stood and came nearer to La Fosseuse, who did not hear him, and spoke again to the curé.

"As soon as I have my pension," he said, "I will come to finish my days here among you."

THE VENDETTA

Dedicated to Puttinati, Sculptor at Milan.

In the year 1800, towards the end of October, a stranger, having with him a woman and a little girl, made his appearance in front of the Tuileries Palace, and stood for some little time close to the ruins of a house, then recently pulled down, on the spot where the wing is still unfinished which was intended to join Catherine de' Medici's Palace to the Louvre built by the Valois. There he stood, his arms folded, his head bent, raising it now and again to look at the Consul's Palace, or at his wife, who sat on a stone by his side.

Though the stranger seemed to think only of the little girl of nine or ten, whose black hair was a plaything in his fingers, the woman lost none of the glances shot at her by her companion. A common feeling, other than love, united these two beings, and a common thought animated their thoughts and their actions. Misery is perhaps the strongest of all bonds.

The man had one of those broad, solemn-looking heads, with a mass of hair, of which so many examples have been perpetuated by the Carracci. Among the thick black locks were many white hairs. His features, though fine and proud, had a set hardness which spoiled them. In spite of his powerful and upright frame, he seemed to be more than sixty years of age. His clothes, which were dilapidated, betrayed his foreign origin.

The woman's face, formerly handsome, but now faded, bore a stamp of deep melancholy, though, when her husband looked at her, she forced herself to smile, and affected a calm expression. The little girl was standing, in spite of the fatigue that was written on her small sun-burnt face. She had Italian features, large black eyes under well-arched eye-

brows, a native dignity and genuine grace. More than one passer-by was touched by the mere sight of this group, for the persons composing it made no effort to disguise a despair evidently as deep as the expression of it was simple; but the spring of the transient kindliness which distinguishes the Parisian is quickly dried up. As soon as the stranger perceived that he was the object of some idler's attention, he stared at him so fiercely that the most intrepid lounger hastened his step, as though he had trodden on a viper.

After remaining there a long time undecided, the tall man suddenly passed his hand across his brow, driving away, so to speak, the thoughts that had furrowed it with wrinkles, and made up his mind no doubt to some desperate determination. Casting a piercing look at his wife and daughter, he drew out of his jerkin a long dagger, held it out to the woman, and said in Italian, "I am going to see whether the Bonapartes remember us."

He walked on, with a slow, confident step, towards the entrance to the palace, where, of course, he was checked by a soldier on guard, with whom there could be no long discussion. Seeing that the stranger was obstinate, the sentry pointed his bayonet at him by way of *ultimatum*. As chance would have it at this moment, a squad came round to relieve guard, and the corporal very civilly informed the stranger where he might find the captain of the guard.

"Let Bonaparte know that Bartolomeo di Piombo wants to see him," said the Italian to the officer.

In vain did the Captain explain to Bartolomeo that it was not possible to see the First Consul without having written to him beforehand to request an audience. The stranger insisted that the officer should go to inform Bonaparte. The Captain urged the rules of his duty, and formally refused to yield to the demands of this strange petitioner. Bartolomeo knit his brows, looked at the Captain with a terrible scowl, and seemed to make him responsible for all the disasters his refusal might occasion; then he remained silent, his arms tightly crossed on his breast, and took his stand

under the archway which connects the garden and the court-yard of the Tuileries.

People who are thoroughly bent on anything are almost always well served by chance. At the moment when Bartolomeo sat down on one of the curbstones near the entrance to the palace, a carriage drove up, and out of it stepped Lucien Bonaparte, at that time Minister of the Interior.

"Ah! Loucien, good luck for me to have met you!" cried the stranger.

These words, spoken in the Corsican dialect, made Lucien stop at the instant when he was rushing into the vestibule; he looked at his fellow-countryman, and recognized him. At the first word that Bartolomeo said in his ear, he took him with him. Murat, Lannes, and Rapp were in the First Consul's Cabinet. On seeing Lucien come in with so strange a figure as was Piombo, the conversation ceased. Lucien took his brother's hand and led him into a window recess. After exchanging a few words, the First Consul raised his hand with a gesture, which Murat and Lannes obeyed by retiring. Rapp affected not to have seen it, and remained. Then, Bonaparte having sharply called him to order, the aide-de-camp went out with a sour face. The First Consul, who heard the sound of Rapp's steps in the neighboring room, hastily followed him, and saw him close to the wall between the cabinet and the ante-room.

"You refuse to understand me?" said the First Consul. "I wish to be alone with my countryman."

"A Corsican!" retorted the aide-de-camp. "I distrust those creatures too much not to——"

The First Consul could not help smiling, and lightly pushed his faithful officer by the shoulders.

"Well, what are you doing here, my poor Bartolomeo?" said the First Consul to Piombo.

"I have come to ask for shelter and protection, if you are a true Corsican," replied Bartolomeo in a rough tone.

"What misfortune has driven you from your native land? You were the richest, the most——"

"I have killed all the Porta," replied the Corsican, in a hollow voice, with a frown.

The First Consul drew back a step or two, like a man astonished.

"Are you going to betray me?" cried Bartolomeo, with a gloomy look at Bonaparte. "Do you forget that there are still four of the Piombo in Corsica?"

Lucien took his fellow-countryman by the arm and shook him.

"Do you come here to threaten the saviour of France?" he said vehemently.

Bonaparte made a sign to Lucien, who was silent. Then he looked at Piombo, and said, "And why did you kill all the Porta?"

"We had made friends," he replied; "the Barbanti had reconciled us. The day after we had drunk together to drown our quarrel I left, because I had business at Bastia. They stayed at my place, and set fire to my vineyard at Longone. They killed my son Gregorio; my daughter Ginevra and my wife escaped; they had taken the Communion that morning; the Virgin protected them. When I got home I could no longer see my house; I searched for it with my feet in the ashes. Suddenly I came across Gregorio's body; I recognized it in the moonlight. 'Oh! the Porta have played this trick!' said I to myself. I went off at once into the scrub; I got together a few men to whom I had done some service—do you hear, Bonaparte?—and we marched down on the Porta's vineyard. We arrived at five in the morning, and by seven they were all in the presence of God. Giacomo declares that Elisa Vanni saved a child, little Luigi; but I tied him into bed with my own hands before setting the house on fire. Then I quitted the island with my wife and daughter without being able to make sure whether Luigi Porta were still alive."

Bonaparte looked at Bartolomeo with curiosity, but no astonishment.

"How many were they?" asked Lucien.

"Seven," replied Piombo. "They persecuted you in their day," he added. The words aroused no sign of hatred in the two brothers. "Ah! you are no longer Corsicans!" cried Bartolomeo, with a sort of despair. "Good-bye. Formerly I protected you," he went on reproachfully. "But for me your mother would never have reached Marseilles," he said, turning to Bonaparte, who stood thoughtful, his elbow resting on the chimney-piece.

"I cannot in conscience take you under my wing, Piombo," replied Napoleon. "I am the head of a great nation; I govern the Republic; I must see that the laws are carried out."

"Ah, ha!" said Bartolomeo.

"But I can shut my eyes," Bonaparte went on. "The tradition of the Vendetta will hinder the reign of law in Corsica for a long time yet," he added, talking to himself. "But it must be stamped out at any cost."

He was silent for a minute, and Lucien signed to Piombo to say nothing. The Corsican shook his head from side to side with a disapproving look.

"Remain here," the First Consul said, addressing Bartolomeo. "We know nothing. I will see that your estates are purchased so as to give you at once the means of living. Then later, some time hence, we will remember you. But no more Vendetta. There is no Marquis scrub here. If you play tricks with your dagger, there is no hope for you. Here the law protects everybody, and we do not do justice on our own account."

"He has put himself at the head of a strange péople," replied Bartolomeo, taking Lucien's hand and pressing it. "But you recognize me in misfortune; it is a bond between us for life and death; and you may command every one named Piombo." As he spoke, his brow cleared, and he looked about him approvingly.

"You are not badly off here," he said, with a smile, as if he would like to lodge there. "And you are dressed all in red like a Cardinal."

"It rests with you to rise and have a palace in Paris," said

Bonaparte, looking at him from head to foot. "It will often happen that I may look about me for a devoted friend to whom I can trust myself."

A sigh of gladness broke from Piombo's deep chest; he held out his hand to the First Consul, saying, "There is something of the Corsican in you still!"

Bonaparte smiled. He gazed in silence at this man, who had brought him as it were a breath of air from his native land, from the island where he had formerly been so miraculously saved from the hatred of the "English party," and which he was fated never to see again. He made a sign to his brother, who led away Bartolomeo di Piombo.

Lucien inquired with interest as to the pecuniary position of the man who had once protected his family. Piombo led the Minister of the Interior to a window and showed him his wife and Ginevra, both seated on a heap of stones.

"We have come from Fontainebleau on foot," said he, "and we have not a sou."

Lucien gave his fellow-countryman his purse, and desired him to come again next morning to consult as to the means of providing for his family. The income from all Piombo's possessions in Corsica could hardly suffice to maintain him respectably in Paris.

Fifteen years elapsed between the arrival of the Piombo family in Paris and the following incidents, which, without the story of this event, would have been less intelligible.

Servin, one of our most distinguished artists, was the first to conceive the idea of opening a studio for young ladies who may wish to take lessons in painting. He was a man of over forty, of blameless habits, and wholly given up to his art, and he had married for love the daughter of a general without any fortune. At first mothers brought their daughters themselves to the professor's studio; but when they understood his high principles and appreciated the care by which he strove to deserve such confidence, they ended by sending the girls alone. It was part of the painter's scheme to take

as pupils only young ladies of rich or highly respectable family, that no difficulties might arise as to the society in his studio; he had even refused to take young girls who intended to become artists, and who must necessarily have had certain kinds of training without which no mastery is possible. By degrees his prudence, the superior method by which he initiated his pupils into the secrets of his art, as well as the security their mothers felt in knowing that their daughters were in the company of well-bred girls, and in the artist's character, manners, and marriage, won him a high reputation in the world of fashion. As soon as a young girl showed any desire to learn drawing or painting, and her mother asked advice, "Send her to Servin," was always the answer.

Thus Servin had a specialty for teaching ladies art, as Herbault had for bonnets, Leroy for dresses, and Chevet for dainties. It was acknowledged that a young woman who had taken lessons of Servin could pronounce definitively on the pictures in the Louvre, paint a portrait in a superior manner, copy an old picture, and produce her own painting of genre. Thus this artist sufficed for all the requirements of the aristocracy.

Notwithstanding his connection with all the best houses in Paris, he was independent and patriotic, preserving with all alike the light and witty tone, sometimes ironical, and the freedom of opinion which characterize painters.

He had carried his scrupulous precautions into the arrangement of the place where his scholars worked. The outer entrance to the loft above his dwelling-rooms had been walled up; to get into this retreat, as sacred as a harem, the way was up a staircase in the centre of the house. This studio, which occupied the whole of the top story, was on the vast scale which always surprises inquisitive visitors when, having climbed to sixty feet above the ground, they expect to find an artist lodged in the gutter. It was a kind of gallery, abundantly lighted by immense skylights screened with the large green blinds which artists use to distribute the light. A quantity of caricatures, heads sketched in outline with a brush

or the point of a palette knife, all over the dark gray walls, proved that, allowing for a difference in the expression, fine young ladies have as much whimsicality in their brain as men can have. A small stove, with a huge pipe that made amazing zigzags before reaching the upper region of the roof, was the inevitable decoration of this studio. There was a shelf all round the room, supporting plaster casts which lay there in confusion, most of them under a coating of whitish dust.

Above this shelf here and there a head of Niobe hanging to a nail showed its pathetic bend, a Venus smiled, a hand was unexpectedly thrust out before your eyes, like a beggar's asking alms; then there were anatomical *écorchés,* yellow with smoke, and looking like limbs snatched from coffins; and pictures, drawings, lay-figures, frames without canvas, and canvases without frames, completed the effect, giving the room the characteristic aspect of a studio, a singular mixture of ornamentation and bareness, of poverty and splendor, of care and neglect.

This huge sort of hold, in which everything, even man, looks small, has a behind-the-scenes flavor; here are to be seen old linen, gilt armor, odds and ends of stuffs, and some machinery. But there is something about it as grand as thought; genius and death are there; Diana and Apollo side by side with a skull or a skeleton; beauty and disorder, poetry and reality, gorgeous coloring in shadow, and often a whole drama, but motionless and silent. How symbolical of the artist brain!

At the moment when my story begins the bright sun of July lighted up the studio, and two beams of sunshine shot across its depths, broad bands of diaphanous gold in which the dust-motes glistened. A dozen easels raised their pointed spars, looking like the masts of vessels in a harbor. Several young girls gave life to the scene by the variety of their countenances and attitudes, and the difference in their dress. The strong shadows cast by the green baize blinds, arranged to suit the position of each easel, produced a multitude of contrasts and fascinating effects of chiaroscuro.

This group of girls formed the most attractive picture in the gallery. A fair-haired girl, simply dressed, stood at some distance from her companions, working perseveringly and seeming to foresee misfortune; no one looked at her nor spoke to her; she was the prettiest, the most modest, and the least rich. Two principal groups, divided by a little space, represented two classes of society, two spirits even, in this studio, where rank and fortune ought to have been forgotten.

These young things, sitting or standing, surrounded by their paint-boxes, playing with their brushes or getting them ready, handling their bright-tinted palettes, painting, chattering, laughing, singing, given up to their natural impulses and revealing their true characters, made up a drama unknown to men; this one proud, haughty, capricious, with black hair and beautiful hands, flashed the fire of her eyes at random; that one, light-hearted and heedless, a smile on her lips, her hair chestnut, with delicate white hands, virginal and French, a light nature without a thought of evil, living from hour to hour; another, dreamy, melancholy, pale, her head drooping like a falling blossom; her neighbor, on the contrary, tall, indolent, with Oriental manners, and long, black, melting eyes, speaking little, but lost in thought, and stealing a look at the head of Antinoüs.

In the midst, like the *Jocoso* of a Spanish comedy, a girl, full of wit and sparkling sallies, stood watching them all with a single glance, and making them laugh; raising a face so full of life that it could not but be pretty. She was the leader of the first group of pupils, consisting of the daughters of bankers, lawyers, and merchants—all rich, but exposed to all the minute but stinging disdains freely poured out upon them by the other young girls who belonged to the aristocracy. These were governed by the daughter of a gentleman usher to the King's private chamber, a vain little thing, as silly as she was vain, and proud of her father's having an office at Court. She aimed at seeming to understand the master's remarks at the first word, and appearing to work by inspired grace; she used an eyeglass, came very much dressed,

very late, and begged her companions not to talk loud. Among this second group might be observed some exquisite shapes and distinguished-looking faces; but their looks expressed but little simplicity. Though their attitudes were elegant and their movements graceful, their faces were lacking in candor, and it was easy to perceive that they belonged to a world where politeness forms the character at an early age, and the abuse of social pleasures kills the feelings and develops selfishness. When the whole party of girl students was complete there were to be seen among them child-like heads, virgin heads of enchanting purity, faces where the parted lips showed virgin teeth, and where a virgin smile came and went. Then the studio suggested not a seraglio, but a group of angels sitting on a cloud in heaven.

It was near noon; Servin had not yet made his appearance. For some days past he had spent most of his time at a studio he had elsewhere, finishing a picture he had there for the exhibition. Suddenly Mademoiselle Amélie Thirion, the head of the aristocrats in this little assembly, spoke at some length to her neighbor; there was profound silence among the patrician group; the banker faction were equally silent from astonishment, and tried to guess the subject of such a conference. But the secret of the young *ultras* was soon known. Amélie rose, took an easel that stood near her, and moved it to some distance from the "nobility," close to a clumsy partition which divided the studio from a dark closet where broken casts were kept, paintings that the professor had condemned, and, in winter, the firewood. Amélie's proceedings gave rise to a murmur of surprise which did not hinder her from completing the removal by wheeling up to the easel a stool and paint-box, in fact, everything, even a picture by Prudhon, of which a pupil, who had not yet come, was making a copy. After this *coup d'état* the party of the Right painted on in silence; but the Left talked it over at great length.

"What will Mademoiselle Piombo say?" asked one of the girls of Mademoiselle Mathilde Roguin, the oracle of mischief of her group.

"She is not a girl to say much," was the reply. "But fifty years hence she will remember this insult as if she had experienced it the day before, and will find some cruel means of revenge. She is a person I should not like to be at war with."

"The proscription to which those ladies have condemned her is all the more unjust," said another young girl, "because Mademoiselle Ginevra was very sad the day before yesterday; her father, they say, has just given up his appointment. This will add to her troubles, while she was very good to those young ladies during the Hundred Days. Did she ever say a word that could hurt them? On the contrary, she avoided talking politics. But our *ultras* seem to be prompted by jealousy rather than by party-spirit."

"I have a great mind to fetch Mademoiselle Piombo's easel and place it by mine," said Mathilde Roguin. She rose, but on second thoughts she sat down again. "With a spirit like Mademoiselle Ginevra's," said she, "it is impossible to know how she would take our civility. Let us wait and see."

"Eccola!" said the black-eyed girl languidly. In fact, the sound of footsteps coming upstairs was heard in the studio. The words, "Here she comes!" passed from mouth to mouth, and then perfect silence fell.

To understand the full importance of the ostracism carried into effect by Amélie Thirion, it must be told that this scene took place towards the end of the month of July 1815. The second restoration of the Bourbons broke up many friendships which had weathered the turmoil of the first. At this time families, almost always divided among themselves, renewed many of the most deplorable scenes which tarnish the history of all countries at periods of civil or religious struggles. Children, young girls, old men, had caught the monarchical fever from which the Government was suffering. Discord flew in under the domestic roof, and suspicion dyed in gloomy hues the most intimate conversations and actions.

Ginevra di Piombo idolized Napoleon; indeed, how could

she have hated him? The Emperor was her fellow-countryman, and her father's benefactor. Baron di Piombo was one of Napoleon's followers who had most efficiently worked to bring him back from Elba. Incapable of renouncing his political faith, nay, eager to proclaim it, Piombo had remained in Paris in the midst of enemies. Hence Ginevra di Piombo was ranked with the "suspicious characters," all the more so because she made no secret of the regret her family felt at the second restoration. The only tears she had perhaps ever shed in her life were wrung from her by the twofold tidings of Bonaparte's surrender on board the *Bellerophon,* and the arrest of Labédoyère.

The young ladies forming the aristocratic party in the studio belonged to the most enthusiastically Royalist families of Paris. It would be difficult to give any idea of the exaggerated feelings of the time, and of the horror felt towards Bonapartists. However mean and trivial Amélie Thirion's conduct may seem to-day, it was then a very natural demonstration of hatred. Ginevra di Piombo, one of Servin's earliest pupils, had occupied the place of which they wished to deprive her ever since the first day she had come to the studio. The aristocratic group had gradually settled round her; and to turn her out of a place, which in a certain sense belonged to her, was not merely to insult her, but to cause her some pain, for all artists have a predilection for the spot where they work.

However, political hostility had perhaps not much to do with the conduct of this little studio party of the Right. Ginevra di Piombo, the most accomplished of Servin's pupils, was an object of the deepest jealousy. The master professed an equal admiration for the talents and the character of this favorite pupil, who served as the standard of all his comparisons; and indeed, while it was impossible to explain the ascendency this young girl exercised over all who were about her, she enjoyed in this small world an influence resembling that of Bonaparte over his soldiers. The aristocratic clique had, some days since, resolved on the overthrow of this queen;

but as no one had been bold enough to repulse the Bonapartist, Mademoiselle Thirion had just struck the decisive blow so as to make her companions the accomplices of her hatred. Though Ginevra was really beloved by some of the Royalist party, who at home were abundantly lectured on politics, with the tact peculiar to women, they judged it best not to interfere in the quarrel.

On entering, Ginevra was received in perfect silence. Of all the girls who had yet appeared at Servin's studio, she was the handsomest, the tallest, and the most finely made. Her gait had a stamp of dignity and grace which commanded respect. Her face, full of intelligence, seemed radiant, it was so transfused with the animation peculiar to Corsicans, which does not exclude calmness. Her abundant hair, her eyes, and their black lashes told of passion. Though the corners of her mouth were softly drawn and her lips a little too thick, they had the kindly expression which strong people derive from the consciousness of strength. By a singular freak of nature the charm of her features was in some sort belied by a marble forehead stamped with an almost savage pride, and the traditional habits of Corsica. That was the only bond between her and her native land; in every other detail of her person the simplicity and freedom of Lombard beauties were so bewitching, that only in her absence could any one bear to cause her the smallest pain. She was, indeed, so attractive, that her old father, out of prudence, never allowed her to walk alone to the studio.

The only fault of this really poetic creature came of the very power of such fully developed beauty. She had refused to marry, out of affection for her father and mother, feeling herself necessary to them in their old age. Her taste for painting had taken the place of the passions which commonly agitate women.

"You are all very silent to-day," she said, after coming forward a step or two. "Good-morning, my little Laure," she added in a gentle, caressing tone, as she went up to the young girl who was painting apart from the rest. "That head is

very good. The flesh is a little too pink, but it is all capitally drawn."

Laure raised her head, looked at Ginevra much touched, and their faces brightened with an expression of mutual affection. A faint smile gave life to the Italian's lips, but she seemed pensive, and went slowly to her place, carelessly glancing at the drawings and pictures, and saying good-morning to each of the girls of the first group, without observing the unusual curiosity excited by her presence. She might have been a queen amid her Court. She did not observe the deep silence that reigned among the aristocrats, and passed their camp without saying a word. Her absence of mind was so complete that she went to her easel, opened her paint-box, took out her brushes, slipped on her brown linen cuffs, tied her apron, examined her palette, all without thinking, as it seemed, of what she was doing. All the heads of the humbler group were turned to look at her. And if the young ladies of the Thirion faction were less frankly impatient than their companions, their side glances were nevertheless directed to Ginevra.

"She notices nothing," said Mademoiselle Roguin.

At this moment Ginevra, roused from the meditative attitude in which she had gazed at her canvas, turned her head towards the aristocratic party. With one glance she measured the distance that lay between them, and held her peace.

"It has not occurred to her that they meant to insult her," said Mathilde. "She has neither colored nor turned pale. How provoked those young ladies will be if she likes her new place better than the old one!"—"You are quite apart there, mademoiselle," she added louder, and addressing Ginevra.

The Italian girl affected not to hear, or perhaps she did not hear; she hastily rose, walked rather slowly along the partition which divided the dark closet from the studio, seeming to examine the skylight from which the light fell; and to this she ascribed so much importance that she got upon a chair to fasten the green baize which interfered with the light, a good deal higher. At this elevation she was on a

level with a small crack in the boarding, the real object of her efforts, for the look she cast through it can only be compared with that of a miser discovering Aladdin's treasure. She quickly descended, came back to her place, arranged her picture, affected still to be dissatisfied with the light, pushed a table close to the partition, and placed a chair on it; then she nimbly mounted this scaffolding, and again peeped through the crack. She gave but one look into the closet, which was lighted by a window at the top of the partition, but what she saw impressed her so vividly that she started.

"You will fall, Mademoiselle Ginevra!" cried Laure.

All the girls turned to look at their imprudent companion, who was tottering. The fear of seeing them gather round her gave her courage; she recovered her strength and her balance, and dancing on the chair, she turned to Laure, and said with some agitation:

"Bah! It is at any rate safer than a throne!"

She quickly arranged the baize, came down, pushed the table and the chair far from the partition, returned to her easel, and made a few more attempts, seeming to try for an effect of light that suited her. Her picture did not really trouble her at all; her aim was to get close to the dark closet by which she placed herself, as she wished, at the end near the door. Then she prepared to set her palette, still in perfect silence. Where she now was she soon heard more distinctly a slight noise which, on the day before, had greatly stirred her curiosity, and sent her young imagination wandering over a wide field of conjecture. She easily recognized it as the deep, regular breathing of the sleeping man whom she had just now seen. Her curiosity was satisfied, but she found herself burdened with an immense responsibility. Through the crack she had caught sight of the Imperial eagle, and on a camp bed, in the dim light, had seen the figure of an officer of the guard. She guessed it all. Servin was sheltering a refugee.

She now trembled lest one of her companions should come to examine her picture, and should hear the unfortunate man

breathe, or heave too deep a sigh, such as had fallen on her ear during yesterday's lesson. She resolved to remain near the door, and trust to her wits to cheat the tricks of fate.

"I had better remain here," thought she, "to prevent some disaster, than leave the poor prisoner at the mercy of some giddy prank."

This was the secret of Ginevra's apparent indifference when she found her easel transplanted; she was secretly delighted, since she had been able to satisfy her curiosity in a natural manner; and besides, she was too much absorbed at this moment to inquire into the reason of her exclusion. Nothing is more mortifying to young girls, or indeed to any one, than to see a practical joke, an insult, or a witticism fail of its effect in consequence of the victim's contempt. It would seem that our hatred of an enemy is increased by the height to which he can rise above us.

Ginevra's conduct remained a riddle to all her companions. Her friends and her foes were alike surprised, for she was allowed to have every good quality excepting forgiveness of injuries. Though the opportunities for showing this vice of temper had rarely been offered to Ginevra by the incidents of studio life, the instances she had happened to give of her vindictive spirit and determination had none the less made a deep impression on her companions' minds. After many guesses, Mademoiselle Roguin finally regarded the Italian's silence as evidence of a magnanimity above all praise; and her party, inspired by her, conceived a plan to humiliate the aristocrats of the studio. They achieved their purpose by a fire of sarcasms directed at the pride and airs of the party of the Right.

Madame Servin's arrival put an end to this contest of self-assertiveness. Amélie, with the shrewdness which is always coupled with malice, had remarked, watched, and wondered at the excessive absence of mind which hindered Ginevra from hearing the keenly polite dispute of which she was the subject. The revenge which Mademoiselle Roguin and her followers were wreaking on Mademoiselle Thirion and her

party had thus the fatal effect of setting the young *Ultras* to discover the cause of Ginevra's absorbed silence. The beautiful Italian became the centre of observation, and was watched by her friends as much as by her enemies. It is very difficult to hide the slightest excitement, the most trifling feeling, from fifteen idle and inquisitive girls whose mischief and wits crave only for secrets to guess, and intrigues to plot or to baffle, and who can ascribe to a gesture, to a glance, to a word, so many meanings, that they can hardly fail to discover the true one. Thus Ginevra di Piombo's secret was in great peril of being found out.

At this moment Madame Servin's presence produced a diversion in the drama that was being obscurely played at the bottom of these young hearts; while its sentiments, its ideas, its development, were expressed by almost allegorical words, by significant looks, by gestures, and even by silence, often more emphatic than speech.

The moment Madame Servin came into the studio her eyes turned to the door by which Ginevra was standing. Under the present circumstances this look was not lost. If at first none of the maidens observed it, Mademoiselle Thirion remembered it afterwards, and accounted for the suspiciousness, the alarm, and mystery which gave a hunted expression to Madame Servin's eyes.

"Mesdemoiselles," she said, "Monsieur Servin cannot come to-day." Then she paid some little compliment to each pupil, all of them welcoming her in the girlish, caressing way which lies as much in the voice and eyes as in actions. She immediately went to Ginevra under an impulse of uneasiness, which she vainly tried to conceal. The Italian and the painter's wife exchanged friendly nods, and then stood in silence, one painting, the other watching her paint. The officer's breathing was easily audible, but Madame Servin could take no notice of it; and her dissimulation was so complete that Ginevra was tempted to accuse her of wilful deafness. At this moment the stranger turned on the bed. The Italian girl looked Madame Servin steadily in the face, and,

without betraying the smallest agitation, the lady said, "Your copy is as fine as the original. If I had to choose, I should really be puzzled."

"Monsieur Servin has not let his wife into the secret of this mystery," thought Ginevra, who, after answering the young wife with a gentle smile of incredulity, sang a snatch of some national canzonetta to cover any sounds the prisoner might make.

It was so unusual to hear the studious Italian sing, that all the girls looked at her in surprise. Later this incident served as evidence to the charitable suppositions of hatred. Madame Servin soon went away, and the hours of study ended without further event. Ginevra let all her companions leave, affecting to work on; but she unconsciously betrayed her wish to be alone, for as the pupils made ready to go she looked at them with ill-disguised impatience. Mademoiselle Thirion, who within these few hours had become a cruel foe to the young girl, who was her superior in everythings, guessed by the instinct of hatred that her rival's affected industry covered a mystery. She had been struck more than once by the attention with which Ginevra seemed to be listening to a sound no one else could hear. The expression she now read in the Italian's eyes was as a flash of illumination. She was the last to leave, and went in on her way down to see Madame Servin, with whom she stayed a few minutes. Then, pretending that she had forgotten her bag, she very softly went upstairs again to the studio, and discovered Ginevra at the top of a hastily constructed scaffolding, so lost in contemplation of the unknown soldier that she did not hear the light sound of her companion's footsteps. It is true that Amélie walked on eggs—to use a phrase of Walter Scott's; she retired to the door and coughed. Ginevra started, turned her head, saw her enemy, and colored; then she quickly untied the blind, to mislead her as to her purpose, and came down. After putting away her paintbox, she left the studio, carrying stamped upon her heart the image of a man's head as charming as the Endymion,

Girodet's masterpiece, which she had copied a few days previously.

"So young a man, and proscribed! Who can he be?—for it is not Marshal Ney."

These two sentences are the simplest expression of all the ideas which Ginevra turned over in her mind during two days. The next day but one, notwithstanding her hurry to be first at the painting gallery, she found that Mademoiselle Thirion had already come in a carriage. Ginevra and her enemy watched each other for some time, but each kept her countenance impenetrable by the other. Amélie had seen the stranger's handsome face; but happily, and at the same time unhappily, the eagles and the uniform were not within the range of her eye through the crack. She lost herself in conjecture. Suddenly Servin came in, much earlier than usual.

"Mademoiselle Ginevra," said he, after casting an eye round the gallery, "why have you placed yourself there? The light is bad. Come nearer to these young ladies, and lower your blind a little."

Then he sat down by Laure, whose work deserved his most lenient criticism.

"Well done!" he exclaimed, "this head is capitally done. You will be a second Ginevra."

The master went from easel to easel, blaming, flattering, and jesting; and making himself, as usual, more feared for his jests than for his reproofs.

The Italian had not obeyed his wishes; she remained at her post with the firm intention of staying there. She took out a sheet of paper and began to sketch in sepia the head of the unhappy refugee. A work conceived of with passion always bears a particular stamp. The faculty of giving truth to a rendering of nature or of a thought constitutes genius, and passion can often take its place. Thus in the circumstances in which Ginevra found herself, either the intuition she owed to her memory, which had been deeply struck, or perhaps necessity, the mother of greatness, lent her a supernatural flash of talent. The officer's head was thrown off

on the paper with an inward trembling that she ascribed to fear, and which a physiologist would have recognized as the fever of inspiration. From time to time she stole a furtive glance at her companions, so as to be able to hide the sketch in case of any indiscretion on their part. But in spite of her sharp lookout, there was a moment when she failed to perceive that her relentless enemy, under the shelter of a huge portfolio, had turned her eyeglass on the mysterious drawing. Mademoiselle Thirion, recognizing the refugee's features, raised her head suddenly, and Ginevra slipped away the sheet of paper.

"Why do you stay there, in spite of my opinion, mademoiselle?" the professor gravely asked Ginevra.

The girl hastily turned her easel so that no one could see her sketch, and said, in an agitated voice, as she showed it to her master:

"Don't you think with me that this is a better light? May I not stay where I am?"

Servin turned pale. As nothing can escape the keen eyes of hatred, Mademoiselle Thirion threw herself, so to speak, into the excited feelings that agitated the professor and his pupil.

"You are right," said Servin. "But you will soon know more than I do," he added, with a forced laugh. There was a silence, during which the master looked at the head of the officer. "This is a masterpiece, worthy of Salvator Rosa!" he exclaimed, with an artist's vehemence.

At this exclamation all the young people rose, and Mademoiselle Thirion came forward with the swiftness of a tiger springing on its prey. At this instant the prisoner, roused by the turmoil, woke up. Ginevra overset her stool, spoke a few incoherent sentences, and began to laugh; but she had folded the portrait in half and thrown it into a portfolio before her terrible enemy could see it. The girls crowded round the easel; Servin enlarged in a loud voice on the beauties of the copy on which his favorite pupil was just now engaged; and all the party were cheated by this stratagem,

excepting Amélie, who placed herself behind her companions and tried to open the portfolio into which she had seen the sketch put. Ginevra seized it and set it in front of her without a word, and the two girls gazed at each other in silence.

"Come, young ladies, to your places!" said Servin. "If you want to know as much as Mademoiselle di Piombo, you must not be always talking of fashions and balls, and trifling so much."

When the girls had all returned to their easels, the master sat down by Ginevra.

"Was it not better that this mystery should be discovered by me than by any one else?" said the Italian girl in a low tone.

"Yes," answered the painter. "You are patriotic; but even if you had not been, you are still the person to whom I should entrust it."

The master and pupil understood each other, and Ginevra was not now afraid to ask, "Who is he?"

"An intimate friend of Labédoyère's; the man who, next to the unfortunate Colonel, did most to effect a junction between the 7th and the Grenadiers of Elba. He was a Major in the Guards, and has just come back from Waterloo."

"Why have you not burned his uniform and shako, and put him into civilian dress?" asked Ginevra vehemently.

"Some clothes are to be brought for him this evening."

"You should have shut up the studio for a few days."

"He is going away."

"Does he wish to die?" said the girl. "Let him stay with you during these first days of the storm. Paris is the only place in France where a man may be safely hidden. Is he a friend of yours?" she added.

"No. He has no claim to my regard but his misfortunes. This is how he fell into my hands; my father-in-law, who had rejoined his regiment during this campaign, met the poor young man, and saved him very cleverly from those who have arrested Labédoyère. He wanted to defend him, like a madman!"

"And do you call him so!" cried Ginevra, with a glance of surprise at the painter, who did not speak for a moment.

"My father-in-law is too closely watched to be able to keep any one in his house," he went on. "He brought him here by night last week. I hoped to hide him from every eye by keeping him in this corner, the only place in the house where he can be safe."

"If I can be of any use, command me," said Ginevra. "I know Marshal Feltre."

"Well, we shall see," replied the painter.

This conversation had lasted too long not to be remarked by all the other pupils. Servin left Ginevra, came back to each easel, and gave such long lessons that he was still upstairs when the clock struck the hour at which his pupils usually left.

"You have forgotten your bag, mademoiselle," cried the professor, running after the young lady, who condescended to act the spy to gratify her hatred.

The inquisitive pupil came back for the bag, expressing some surprise at her own carelessness; but Servin's attention was to her additional proof of the existence of a mystery which was undoubtedly a serious one. She had already planned what should follow, and could say, like the Abbé Vertot, "I have laid my siege." She ran downstairs noisily, and violently slammed the door leading to Servin's rooms, that it might be supposed she had gone out; but she softly went upstairs again, and hid behind the door of the studio.

When the painter and Ginevra supposed themselves alone, he tapped in a particular manner at the door of the attic, which at once opened on its rusty, creaking hinges. The Italian girl saw a tall and well-built youth, whose Imperial uniform set her heart beating. The officer carried his arm in a sling, and his pale face told of acute suffering. He started at seeing her, a stranger. Amélie, who could see nothing, was afraid to stay any longer; but she had heard the creaking of the door, and that was enough. She silently stole away.

"Fear nothing," said the painter. "Mademoiselle is the daughter of the Emperor's most faithful friend, the Baron di Piombo."

The young officer felt no doubt of Ginevra's loyalty when once he had looked at her.

"You are wounded?" she said.

"Oh, it is nothing, mademoiselle; the cut is healing."

At this moment the shrill and piercing tones of men in the street came up to the studio, crying out, "This is the sentence which condemns to death—" All three shuddered. The soldier was the first to hear a name at which he turned pale.

"Labédoyère!" he exclaimed, dropping on to a stool.

They looked at each other in silence. Drops of sweat gathered on the young man's livid brow; with a gesture of despair he clutched the black curls of his hair, resting his elbow on Ginevra's easel.

"After all," said he, starting to his feet, "Labédoyère and I knew what we were doing. We knew the fate that awaited us if we triumphed or if we failed. He is dying for the cause, while I am in hiding——"

He hurried towards the studio door; but Ginevra, more nimble than he, rushed forward and stopped the way.

"Can you restore the Emperor?" she said. "Do you think you can raise the giant again, when he could not keep his feet?"

"What then is to become of me?" said the refugee, addressing the two friends whom chance had sent him. "I have not a relation in the world; Labédoyère was my friend and protector, I am now alone; to-morrow I shall be exiled or condemned; I have never had any fortune but my pay; I spent my last crown-piece to come and snatch Labédoyère from death and get him away. Death is an obvious necessity to me. When a man is determined to die, he must know how to sell his head to the executioner. I was thinking just now that an honest man's life is well worth that of two traitors, and that a dagger-thrust, judiciously placed, may give one immortality."

This passion of despair frightened the painter, and even Ginevra, who fully understood the young man. The Italian admired the beautiful head and the delightful voice, of which the accents of rage scarcely disguised the sweetness; then she suddenly dropped balm on all the hapless man's wounds.

"Monsieur!" said she, "as to your pecuniary difficulties, allow me to offer you the money I myself have saved. My father is rich; I am his only child; he loves me, and I am quite sure he will not blame me. Have no scruples in accepting it; our wealth comes from the Emperor, we have nothing which is not the bounty of his munificence. Is it not gratitude to help one of his faithful soldiers? So take this money with as little ceremony as I make about offering it. It is only money," she added in a scornful tone. "Then, as to friends—you will find friends!" And she proudly raised her head, while her eyes shone with unwonted brilliancy. "The head which must fall to-morrow—the mark of a dozen guns—saves yours," she went on. "Wait till this storm is over, and you can take service in a foreign land if you are not forgotten, or in the French army if you are."

In the comfort offered by a woman there is a delicacy of feeling which always has a touch of something motherly, something far-seeing and complete; but when such words of peace and hope are seconded by grace of gesture, and the eloquence which comes from the heart, above all, when the comforter is beautiful, it is hard for a young man to resist. The young Colonel inhaled love by every sense. A faint flush tinged his white cheeks, and his eyes lost a little of the melancholy that dimmed them as he said, in a strange tone of voice, "You are an angel of goodness!—But, Labédoyère!" he added, "Labédoyère!"

At this cry they all three looked at each other, speechless, and understood each other. They were friends, not of twenty minutes, but of twenty years.

"My dear fellow," said Servin, "can you save him?"

"I can avenge him."

Ginevra was thrilled. Though the stranger was handsome,

his appearance had not moved her. The gentle pity that women find in their heart for suffering which is not ignoble had, in Ginevra, stifled every other emotion; but to hear a cry of revenge, to find in this fugitive an Italian soul and Corsican magnanimity! This was too much for her; she gazed at the officer with respectful emotion, which powerfully stirred her heart. It was the first time a man had ever made her feel so strongly. Like all women, it pleased her to imagine that the soul of this stranger must be in harmony with the remarkable beauty of his features and the fine proportions of his figure, which she admired as an artist. Led by chance curiosity to pity, from pity to eager interest, she now from interest had reached sensations so strong and deep that she thought it rash to remain there any longer.

"Till to-morrow," she said, leaving her sweetest smile with the officer, to console him.

As he saw that smile, which threw a new light, as it were, on Ginevra's face, the stranger for a moment forgot all else.

"To-morrow," he repeated sadly. "To-morrow, Labédoyère——"

Ginevra turned to him and laid a finger on her lips, looking at him as though she would say, "Be calm, be prudent."

Then the young man exclaimed: *"O Dio! Chi non vorrei vivere dopo averla veduta!"* "O God! who would not live after having seen her!" The peculiar accent with which he spoke the words startled Ginevra.

"You are a Corsican!" she exclaimed, coming back to him, her heart beating with gladness.

"I was born in Corsica," he replied; "but I was taken to Genoa when very young; and, as soon as I was of an age to enter the army, I enlisted."

The stranger's handsome person, the transcendent charm he derived from his attachment to the Emperor, his wound, his misfortunes, even his danger, all vanished before Ginevra's eyes, or rather all were fused in one new and exquisite sentiment. This refugee was a son of Corsica, and

spoke its beloved tongue. In a minute the girl stood motionless, spellbound by a magical sensation. She saw before her eyes a living picture to which a combination of human feeling and chance lent dazzling hues. At Servin's invitation the officer had taken his seat on an ottoman, the painter had untied the string which supported his guest's arm, and was now undoing the bandages in order to dress the wound. Ginevra shuddered as she saw the long wide gash, made by a sabre-cut, on the young man's forearm, and gave a little groan. The stranger looked up at her and began to smile. There was something very touching that went to the soul in Servin's attentive care as he removed the lint and touched the tender flesh, while the wounded man's face, though pale and sickly, expressed pleasure rather than suffering as he looked at the young girl.

An artist could not help admiring the antithesis of sentiments, and the contrast of color between the whiteness of the linen and the bare arm and the officer's blue and red coat. Soft dusk had now fallen on the studio, but a last sunbeam shone in on the spot where the refugee was sitting, in such a way that his pale, noble face, his black hair, his uniform were all flooded with light. This simple effect the superstitious Italian took for an omen of good luck. The stranger seemed to her a celestial messenger who had spoken to her in the language of her native land, and put her under the spell of childish memories; while in her heart a feeling had birth as fresh and pure as her first age of innocence. In a very short instant she stood pensive, lost in infinite thought; then she blushed to have betrayed her absence of mind, exchanged a swift, sweet look with the officer, and made her escape, seeing him still.

The next day there was no painting lesson; Ginevra could come to the studio, and the prisoner could be with his fellow-countrywoman. Servin, who had a sketch to finish, allowed the officer to sit there while he played guardian to the two young people who frequently spoke in Corsican. The poor soldier told of his sufferings during the retreat from

Moscow; for, at the age of nineteen, he had found himself at the passage of the Beresina, alone of all his regiment, having lost in his comrades the only men who could care for him, an orphan. He described, in words of fire, the great disaster of Waterloo.

His voice was music to the Italian girl. Brought up in Corsican ways, Ginevra was, to some extent, a child of nature; falsehood was unknown to her, and she gave herself up without disguise to her impressions, owning them, or rather letting them be seen without the trickery, the mean and calculating vanity of the Parisian girl. During this day she remained more than once, her palette in one hand, a brush in the other, while the brush was undipped in the colors on the palette; her eyes fixed on the officer's face, her lips slightly parted, she sat listening, ready to lay on the touch which was not given. She was not surprised to find such sweetness in the young man's eyes, for she felt her own soften in spite of her determination to keep them severe and cold. Thus, for hours, she painted with resolute attention, not raising her head because he was there watching her work. The first time he sat down to gaze at her in silence, she said to him in an agitated voice, after a long pause, "Does it amuse you, then, to look on a painting?"

That day she learned that his name was Luigi. Before they parted it was agreed that if any important political events should occur on the days when the studio was open, Ginevra was to inform him by singing in an undertone certain Italian airs.

On the following day Mademoiselle Thirion informed all her companions, as a great secret, that Ginevra di Piombo had a lover—a young man who came during the hours devoted to lessons—to hide in the dark closet of the studio.

"You, who take her part," said she to Mademoiselle Roguin, "watch her well, and you will see how she spends her time."

So Ginevra was watched with diabolical vigilance. Her songs were listened to, her glances spied. At moments when

she believed that no one saw her, a dozen eyes were incessantly centered on her. And being forewarned, the girls interpreted in their true sense the agitations which passed across the Italian's radiant face, and her snatches of song, and the attention with which she listened to the muffled sounds which she alone could hear through the partition.

By the end of the week, only Laure, of the fifteen students, had resisted the temptation to scrutinize Louis through the crack in the panel, or, by an instinct of weakness, still defended the beautiful Corsican girl. Mademoiselle Roguin wanted to make her wait on the stairs at the hour when they all left, to prove to her the intimacy between Ginevra and the handsome young man, by finding them together; but she refused to condescend to an espionage which curiosity could not justify, and thus became an object of general reprobation.

Ere long the daughter of the Gentleman-usher thought it unbecoming in her to work in the studio of a painter whose opinions were tainted with patriotism or Bonapartism—which at that time were regarded as one and the same thing; so she came no more to Servin's. Though Amélie forgot Ginevra, the evil she had sown bore fruit. Insensibly, by chance, for gossip, or out of prudery, the other damsels informed their mothers of the strange adventure in progress at the studio. One day Mathilde Roguin did not come; the next time another was absent; at last the three or four pupils, who had still remained, came no more. Ginevra and her little friend, Mademoiselle Laure, were for two or three days the sole occupants of the deserted studio.

The Italian did not observe the isolation in which she was left, and did not even wonder at the cause of her companions' absence. Having devised the means of communicating with Louis, she lived in the studio as in a delightful retreat, secluded in the midst of the world, thinking only of the officer, and of the dangers which threatened him. This young creature, though sincerely admiring those noble characters who would not be false to their political faith, urged Louis

to submit at once to royal authority, in order to keep him in France, while Louis refused to submit, that he might not have to leave his hiding-place.

If, indeed, passions only have their birth and grow up under the influence of romantic causes, never had so many circumstances concurred to link two beings by one feeling. Ginevra's regard for Louis, and his for her, thus made greater progress in a month than a fashionable friendship can make in ten years in a drawing-room. Is not adversity the touchstone of character? Hence Ginevra could really appreciate Louis, and know him, and they soon felt a reciprocal esteem. Ginevra, who was older than Louis, found it sweet to be courted by a young man already so great, so tried by fortune, who united the experience of a man with the graces of youth. Louis, on his part, felt unspeakable delight in allowing himself to be apparently protected by a girl of five-and-twenty. Was it not a proof of love? The union in Ginevra of pride and sweetness, of strength and weakness, had an irresistible charm; Louis was indeed completely her slave. In short, they were already so deeply in love that they felt no need either to deny it to themselves, nor to tell it.

One day, towards evening, Ginevra heard the signal agreed on—Louis tapped on the woodwork with a pin, so gently as to make no more noise than a spider attaching its thread—thus asking if he might come out. She glanced round the studio, did not see little Laure, and answered the summons; but as the door was opened, Louis caught sight of the girl, and hastily retreated. Ginevra, much surprised, looked about her, saw Laure, and going up to her easel, said, "You are staying very late, dear. And that head seems to me finished; there is only a reflected light to put in on that lock of hair."

"It would be very kind of you," said Laure, in a tremulous voice, "if you would correct this copy for me; I should have something of your doing to keep."

"Of course I will," said Ginevra, sure of thus dismissing her. "I thought," she added, as she put in a few light touches, "that you had a long way to go home from the studio."

"Oh! Ginevra, I am going away for good," cried the girl, sadly.

"You are leaving Monsieur Servin?" asked the Italian, not seeming affected by her words, as she would have been a month since.

"Have you not noticed, Ginevra, that for some time there has been nobody here but you and me?"

"It is true," replied Ginevra, suddenly struck as by a reminiscence. "Are they ill, or going to be married, or are all their fathers employed now at the palace?"

"They have all left Monsieur Servin," said Laure.

"And why?"

"On your account, Ginevra."

"Mine!" repeated the Corsican, rising, with a threatening brow, and a proud sparkle in her eyes.

"Oh, do not be angry, dear Ginevra," Laure piteously exclaimed. "But my mother wishes that I should leave too. All the young ladies said that you had an intrigue; that Monsieur Servin had lent himself to allowing a young man who loves you to stay in the dark closet; but I never believed these calumnies, and did not tell my mother. Last evening Madame Roguin met my mother at a ball, and asked her whether she still sent me here. When mamma said Yes, she repeated all those girls' tales. Mamma scolded me well; she declared I must have known it all, and that I had failed in the confidence of a daughter in her mother by not telling her. Oh, my dear Ginevra, I, who always took you for my model, how grieved I am not to be allowed to stay on with you——"

"We shall meet again in the world; young women get married," said Ginevra.

"When they are rich," replied Laure.

"Come to see me, my father has wealth——"

"Ginevra," Laure went on, much moved, "Madame Roguin and my mother are coming to-morrow to see Monsieur Servin, and complain of his conduct. At least let him be prepared."

A thunderbolt falling at her feet would have astonished Ginevra less than this announcement.

"What could it matter to them?" she innocently asked.

"Every one thinks it very wrong. Mamma says it is quite improper."

"And you, Laure, what do you think about it?"

The girl looked at Ginevra, and their hearts met. Laure could no longer restrain her tears; she threw herself on her friend's neck and kissed her. At this moment Servin came in.

"Mademoiselle Ginevra," he said, enthusiastically, "I have finished my picture, it is being varnished.—But what is the matter? All the young ladies are making holiday, it would seem, or are gone into the country."

Laure wiped away her tears, took leave of Servin, and went away.

"The studio had been deserted for some days," said Ginevra, "and those young ladies will return no more."

"Pooh!"

"Nay, do not laugh," said Ginevra, "listen to me. I am the involuntary cause of your loss of repute."

The artist smiled, and said, interrupting his pupil, "My repute? But in a few days my picture will be exhibited."

"It is not your talent that is in question," said the Italian girl; "but your morality. The young ladies have spread a report that Louis is shut up here, and that you—lent yourself to our love-making."

"There is some truth in that, mademoiselle," replied the professor. "The girls' mothers are airified prudes," he went on. "If they had but come to me, everything would have been explained. But what do I care for such things? Life is too short!"

And the painter snapped his fingers in the air.

Louis, who had heard part of the conversation, came out of his cupboard.

"You are losing all your pupils," he cried, "and I shall have been your ruin!"

The artist took his hand and Ginevra's, and joined them. "Will you marry each other, my children?" he asked, with

touching bluntness. They both looked down, and their silence was their first mutual confession of love. "Well," said Servin, "and you will be happy, will you not? Can anything purchase such happiness as that of two beings like you?"

"I am rich," said Ginevra, "if you will allow me to indemnify you——"

"Indemnify!" Servin broke in. "Why, as soon as it is known that I have been the victim of a few little fools, and that I have sheltered a fugitive, all the Liberals in Paris will send me their daughters! Perhaps I shall be in your debt then."

Louis grasped his protector's hand, unable to speak a word; but at last he said, in a broken voice, "To you I shall owe all my happiness."

"Be happy; I unite you," said the painter with comic unction, laying his hands on the heads of the lovers.

This pleasantry put an end to their emotional mood. They looked at each other, and all three laughed. The Italian girl wrung Louis' hand with a passionate grasp, and with a simple impulse worthy of her Corsican traditions.

"Ah, but, my dear children," said Servin, "you fancy that now everything will go on swimmingly? Well, you are mistaken." They looked at him in amazement.

"Do not be alarmed; I am the only person inconvenienced by your giddy behavior. But Madame Servin is the pink of propriety, and I really do not know how we shall settle matters with her."

"Heavens! I had forgotten. To-morrow Madame Roguin and Laure's mother are coming to you——"

"I understand!" said the painter, interrupting her.

"But you can justify yourself," said the girl, with a toss of her head of emphatic pride. "Monsieur Louis," and she turned to him with an arch look, "has surely no longer an antipathy for the King's Government?"—"Well, then," she went on, after seeing him smile, "to-morrow morning I shall address a petition to one of the most influential persons at the

Ministry of War, a man who can refuse the Baron di Piombo's daughter nothing. We will obtain a tacit pardon for Captain Louis—for *they* will not recognize your grade as Colonel. And you," she added, speaking to Servin, "may annihilate the mammas of my charitable young companions by simply telling them the truth."

"You are an angel!" said Servin.

While this scene was going on at the studio, Ginevra's father and mother were impatiently expecting her return.

"It is six o'clock, and Ginevra is not yet home," said Bartolomeo.

"She was never so late before," replied his wife.

The old people looked at each other with all the signs of very unusual anxiety. Bartolomeo, too much excited to sit still, rose and paced the room twice, briskly enough for a man of seventy-seven. Thanks to a strong constitution, he had changed but little since the day of his arrival at Paris, and tall as he was, he was still upright. His hair, thin and white now, had left his head bald, a broad and bossy skull which gave token of great strength and firmness. His face, deeply furrowed, had grown full and wide, with the pale complexion that inspires veneration. The fire of a passionate nature still lurked in the unearthly glow of his eyes, and the brows, which were not quite white, preserved their terrible mobility. The aspect of the man was severe, but it could be seen that Bartolomeo had the right to be so. His kindness and gentleness were known only to his wife and daughter. In his official position, or before strangers, he never set aside the majesty which time had lent to his appearance; and his habit of knitting those thick brows, of setting every line in his face, and assuming a Napoleonic fixity of gaze, made him seem as cold as marble.

In the course of his political life he had been so generally feared that he was thought unsociable; but it is not difficult to find the causes of such a reputation. Piombo's life, habits, and fidelity were a censure on most of the courtiers. Notwithstanding the secret missions entrusted to his discretion,

which to any other man would have proved lucrative, he had not more than thirty thousand francs a year in Government securities. And when we consider the low price of stock under the Empire, and Napoleon's liberality to those of his faithful adherents who knew how to ask, it is easy to perceive that the Baron di Piombo was a man of stern honesty; he owed his Baron's plumage only to the necessity of bearing a title when sent by Napoleon to a foreign Court.

Bartolomeo had always professed implacable hatred of the traitors whom Napoleon had gathered about him, believing he could win them over by his victories. It was he—so it was said—who took three steps towards the door of the Emperor's room, after advising him to get rid of three men then in France, on the day before he set out on his famous and brilliant campaign of 1814. Since the second return of the Bourbons, Bartolomeo had ceased to wear the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. No man ever offered a finer image of the old Republicans, the incorruptible supporters of the Empire, who survived as the living derelicts of the two most vigorous Governments the world has perhaps ever seen. If Baron di Piombo had displeased some courtiers, Daru, Drouot, Carnot were his friends. And, indeed, since Waterloo, he cared no more about other political figures than for the puffs of smoke he blew from his cigar.

With the moderate sum which *Madame,* Napoleon's mother, had paid him for his estates in Corsica, Bartolomeo di Piombo had acquired the old Hôtel de Portenduère, in which he made no alterations. Living almost always in official residences at the cost of the Government, he had resided in this mansion only since the catastrophe of Fontainebleau. Like all simple folks of lofty character, the Baron and his wife cared nothing for external splendor; they still used the old furniture they had found in the house. The reception rooms of this dwelling, lofty, gloomy, and bare, the huge mirrors set in old gilt frames almost black with age, the furniture from the time of Louis XIV., were in keeping with Bartolomeo and his wife—figures worthy of antiquity.

Under the Empire, and during the Hundred Days, while holding offices that brought handsome salaries, the old Corsican had kept house in grand style, but rather to do honor to his position than with a view to display.

His life, and that of his wife and daughter, was so frugal, so quiet, that their modest fortune sufficed for their needs. To them their child Ginevra outweighed all the riches on earth. And when, in May 1814, Baron di Piombo resigned his place, dismissed his household, and locked his stable-doors, Ginevra, as simple and unpretentious as her parents, had not a regret. Like all great souls, she found luxury in strength of feeling, as she sought happiness in solitude and work.

And these three loved each other too much for the externals of life to have any value in their eyes. Often—and especially since Napoleon's second and fearful fall—Bartolomeo and his wife spent evenings of pure delight in listening to Ginevra as she played the piano or sang. To them there was an immense mystery of pleasure in their daughter's presence, in her lightest word; they followed her with their eyes with tender solicitude; they heard her step in the courtyard, however lightly she trod. Like lovers, they would all three sit silent for hours, hearing, better than in words, the eloquence of each other's soul. This deep feeling, the very life of the two old people, filled all their thoughts. Not three lives were here, but one, which, like the flame on a hearth, burnt up in three tongues of fire.

Though now and then memories of Napoleon's bounty and misfortunes, or the politics of the day, took the place of their constant preoccupation, they could talk of them without breaking their community of thought. For did not Ginevra share their political passions? What could be more natural than the eagerness with which they withdrew into the heart of their only child? Until now the business of public life had absorbed Baron di Piombo's energies; but in resigning office the Corsican felt the need of throwing his energy into the last feeling that was left to him; and, besides the tie

that bound a father and mother to their daughter, there was perhaps, unknown to these three despotic spirits, a powerful reason in the fanaticism of their reciprocal devotion; their love was undivided; Ginevra's whole heart was given to her father, as Piombo's was to her; and certainly, if it is true that we are more closely attached to one another by our faults than by our good qualities, Ginevra responded wonderfully to all her father's passions. Herein lay the single defect of this threefold existence. Ginevra was wholly given over to her vindictive impulses, carried away by them, as Bartolomeo had been in his youth. The Corsican delighted in encouraging these savage emotions in his daughter's heart, exactly as a lion teaches his whelps to spring on their prey. But as this apprenticeship to revenge could only be carried out under the parental roof, Ginevra never forgave her father anything; he always had to succumb. Piombo regarded these factitious quarrels as mere childishness, but the child thus acquired a habit of domineering over her parents. In the midst of these tempests which Bartolomeo loved to raise, a tender word, a look, was enough to soothe their angry spirits, and they were never so near kissing as when threatening wrath.

However, from the age of about five, Ginevra, growing wiser than her father, constantly avoided these scenes. Her faithful nature, her devotion, the affection which governed all her thoughts, and her admirable good sense, had got the better of her rages; still a great evil had resulted: Ginevra lived with her father and mother on a footing of equality which is always disastrous.

To complete the picture of all the changes that had happened to these three persons since their arrival in Paris, Piombo and his wife, people of no education, had allowed Ginevra to study as she would. Following her girlish fancy, she had tried and given up everything, returning to each idea, and abandoning each in turn, until painting had become her ruling passion; she would have been perfect if her mother had been capable of directing her studies, of enlightening

and harmonizing her natural gifts. Her faults were the outcome of the pernicious training that the old Corsican had delighted to give her.

After making the floor creak for some minutes under his feet, the old man rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"Go to meet Mademoiselle Ginevra," said the master.

"I have always been sorry that we have no longer a carriage for her," said the Baroness.

"She would not have one," replied Piombo, looking at his wife; and she, accustomed for twenty years to obedience as her part, cast down her eyes.

Tall, thin, pale, and wrinkled, and now past seventy, the Baroness was exactly like the old woman whom Schnetz introduces into the Italian scenes of his genre-pictures; she commonly sat so silent that she might have been taken for a second Mrs. Shandy; but a word, a look, a gesture would betray that her feelings had all the vigor and freshness of youth. Her dress, devoid of smartness, was often devoid of taste. She usually remained passive, sunk in an armchair, like a Sultana *valideh,* waiting for, or admiring Ginevra—her pride and life. Her daughter's beauty, dress, and grace seemed to have become her own. All was well with her if Ginevra were content. Her hair had turned white, and a few locks were visible above her furrowed brow, and at the side of her withered cheeks.

"For about a fortnight now," said she, "Ginevra has been coming in late."

"Jean will not go fast enough," cried the impatient old man, crossing over the breast of his blue coat; he snatched up his hat, crammed it on to his head, and was off.

"You will not get far," his wife called after him.

In fact, the outer gate opened and shut, and the old mother heard Ginevra's steps in the courtyard. Bartolomeo suddenly reappeared, carrying his daughter in triumph, while she struggled in his arms.

"Here she is! La Ginevra, la Ginevrettina, la Ginevrina, la Ginevrola, la Ginevretta, la Ginevra bella!"

"Father! you are hurting me!"

Ginevra was immediately set down with a sort of respect. She nodded her head with a graceful gesture to reassure her mother, who was alarmed, and to convey that it had been only an excuse. Then the Baroness' pale, dull face regained a little color, and even a kind of cheerfulness. Piombo rubbed his hands together extremely hard—the most certain symptom of gladness; he had acquired the habit at Court when seeing Napoleon in a rage with any of his generals or ministers who served him ill, or who had committed some blunder. When once the muscles of his face were relaxed, the smallest line in his forehead expressed benevolence. These two old folks at this moment were exactly like drooping plants, which are restored to life by a little water after a long drought.

"Dinner, dinner!" cried the Baron, holding out his hand to Ginevra, whom he addressed as Signora Piombellina, another token of good spirits, to which his daughter replied with a smile.

"By the way," said Piombo, as they rose from table, "do you know that your mother has remarked that for a month past you have stayed at the studio much later than usual? Painting before parents, it would seem."

"Oh, dear father——"

"Ginevra is preparing some surprise for us, no doubt," said the mother.

"You are going to bring me a picture of your painting?" cried the Corsican, clapping his hands.

"Yes, I am very busy at the studio," she replied.

"What ails you, Ginevra? you are so pale," asked her mother.

"No!" exclaimed the girl, with a resolute gesture. "No! it shall never be said that Ginevra Piombo ever told a lie in her life."

On hearing this strange exclamation, Piombo and his wife looked at their daughter with surprise.

"I love a young man," she added, in a broken voice. Then,

not daring to look at her parents, her heavy eyelids drooped as if to veil the fire in her eyes.

"Is he a prince?" asked her father ironically; but his tone of voice made both the mother and daughter tremble.

"No, father," she modestly replied, "he is a young man of no fortune——"

"Then is he so handsome?"

"He is unfortunate."

"What is he?"

"As a comrade of Labédoyère's he was outlawed, homeless; Servin hid him, and——"

"Servin is a good fellow, and did well," cried Piombo. "But you, daughter, have done ill to love any man but your father——"

"Love is not within my control," said Ginevra gently.

"I had flattered myself," said her father, "that my Ginevra would be faithful to me till my death; that my care and her mother's would be all she would have known; that our tenderness would never meet with a rival affection in her heart; that——"

"Did I ever reproach you for your fanatical devotion to Napoleon?" said Ginevra. "Have you never loved any one but me? Have you not been away on Embassies for months at a time? Have I not borne your absence bravely? Life has necessities to which we must yield."

"Ginevra!"

"No, you do not love me for my own sake, and your reproaches show intolerable selfishness."

"And you accuse your father's love!" cried Piombo with flaming looks.

"Father, I will never accuse you," replied Ginevra, more gently than her trembling mother expected. "You have right on the side of your egoism, as I have right on the side of my love. Heaven is my witness that no daughter ever better fulfilled her duty to her parents. I have never known anything but love and happiness in what many daughters regard as obligations. Now, for fifteen years, I have never

been anywhere but under your protecting wing, and it has been a very sweet delight to me to charm your lives. But am I then ungrateful in giving myself up to the joy of loving, and in wishing for a husband to protect me after you?"

"So you balance accounts with your father, Ginevra!" said the old man in ominous tones.

There was a frightful pause; no one dared to speak. Finally, Bartolomeo broke the silence by exclaiming in a heartrending voice: "Oh, stay with us; stay with your old father! I could not bare to see you love a man. Ginevra, you will not have long to wait for your liberty——"

"But, my dear father, consider; we shall not leave you, we shall be two to love you; you will know the man to whose care you will bequeath me. You will be doubly loved by me and by him—by him, being part of me, and by me who am wholly he."

"Oh, Ginevra, Ginevra!" cried the Corsican, clenching his fists, "why were you not married when Napoleon had accustomed me to the idea, and introduced dukes and counts as your suitors."

"They only loved me to order," said the young girl. "Besides, I did not wish to leave you; and they would have taken me away with them."

"You do not wish to leave us alone," said Piombo, "but if you marry you isolate us. I know you, my child, you will love us no more. Elisa," he added, turning to his wife, who sat motionless and, as it were, stupefied; "we no longer have a daughter; she wants to be married."

The old man sat down, after raising his hands in the air as though to invoke God; then he remained bent, crushed by his grief. Ginevra saw her father's agitation, and the moderation of his wrath pierced her to the heart; she had expected a scene and furies; she had not steeled her soul against his gentleness.

"My dear father," she said in an appealing voice, "no, you shall never be abandoned by your Ginevra. But love me too a little for myself. If only you knew how he loves me! Ah, he could never bear to cause me pain!"

"What, comparisons already!" cried Piombo in a terrible voice. "No," he went on, "I cannot endure the idea. If he were to love you as you deserve, he would kill me; and if he were not to love you, I should stab him!"

Piombo's hands were trembling, his lips trembled, his whole frame trembled, and his eyes flashed lightnings; Ginevra alone could meet his gaze; for then her eyes too flashed fire, and the daughter was worthy of the father.

"To love you! What man is worthy of such a life?" he went on. "To love you as a father even—is it not to live in Paradise? Who then could be worthy to be your husband?"

"He," said Ginevra. "He of whom I feel myself unworthy."

"He," echoed Piombo mechanically. "Who? He?"

"The man I love."

"Can he know you well enough already to adore you?"

"But, father," said Ginevra, feeling a surge of impatience, "even if he did not love me, so long as I love him——"

"You do love him then?" cried Piombo. Ginevra gently bowed her head. "You love him more than you love me?"

"The two feelings cannot be compared" she replied.

"One is stronger than the other?" said Piombo.

"Yes, I think so," said Ginevra.

"You shall not marry him!" cried the Corsican in a voice that made the windows rattle.

"I will marry him!" replied Ginevra calmly.

"Good God!" cried the mother, "how will this quarrel end? *Santa Virginia,* come between them!"

The Baron, who was striding up and down the room, came and seated himself. An icy sternness darkened his face; he looked steadfastly at his daughter, and said in a gentle and affectionate voice, "Nay, Ginevra—you will not marry him. Oh, do not say you will, this evening. Let me believe that you will not. Do you wish to see your father on his knees before you, and his white hairs humbled? I will beseech you——"

"Ginevra Piombo is not accustomed to promise and not to keep her word," said she; "I am your child."

"She is right," said the Baroness, "we come into the world to marry."

"And so you encourage her in disobedience," said the Baron to his wife, who, stricken by the reproof, froze into a statue.

"It is not disobedience to refuse to yield to an unjust command," replied Ginevra.

"It cannot be unjust when it emanates from your father's lips, my child. Why do you rise in judgment on me? Is not the repugnance I feel a counsel from on High? I am perhaps saving you from some misfortune."

"The misfortune would be that he should not love me."

"Always he!"

"Yes, always," she said. "He is my life, my joy, my thought. Even if I obeyed you, he would be always in my heart. If you forbid me to marry him, will it not make me hate you?"

"You love us no longer!" cried Piombo.

"Oh!" said Ginevra, shaking her head.

"Well, then, forget him. Be faithful to us. After us . . . you understand . . ."

"Father, would you make me wish that you were dead?" cried Ginevra.

"I shall outlive you; children who do not honor their parents die early," cried her father at the utmost pitch of exasperation.

"All the more reason for marrying soon and being happy," said she.

This coolness, this force of argument, brought Piombo's agitation to a crisis; the blood rushed violently to his head, his face turned purple. Ginevra shuddered; she flew like a bird on to her father's knees, threw her arms round his neck, stroked his hair, and exclaimed, quite overcome:

"Oh, yes, let me die first! I could not survive you, my dear, kind father."

"Oh, my Ginevra, my foolish Ginevretta!" answered Piombo, whose rage melted under this caress as an icicle melts in the sunshine.

"It was time you should put an end to the matter," said the Baroness in a broken voice.

"Poor mother!"

"Ah, Ginevretta, mia Ginevra bella!"

And the father played with his daughter as if she were a child of six; he amused himself with undoing the waving tresses of her hair and dancing her on his knee; there was dotage in his demonstrations of tenderness. Presently his daughter scolded him as she kissed him, and tried, half in jest, to get leave to bring Louis to the house; but, jesting too, her father refused. She sulked, and recovered herself, and sulked again; then, at the end of the evening, she was only too glad to have impressed on her father the ideas of her love for Louis and of a marriage ere long.

Next day she said no more about it; she went later to the studio and returned early; she was more affectionate to her father than she had ever been, and showed herself grateful, as if to thank him for the consent to her marriage he seemed to give by silence. In the evening she played and sang for a long time, and exclaimed now and then, "This nocturne requires a man's voice!" She was an Italian, and that says everything.

A week later her mother beckoned her; Ginevra went, and then in her ear she whispered, "I have persuaded your father to receive him."

"Oh, mother! you make me very happy."

So that afternoon, Ginevra had the joy of coming home to her father's house leaning on Louis' arm. The poor officer came out of his hiding-place for the second time. Ginevra's active intervention addressed to the Duc de Feltre, then Minister of War, had been crowned with perfect success. Louis had just been reinstated as an officer on the reserve list. This was a very long step towards a prosperous future.

Informed by Ginevra of all the difficulties he would meet with in the Baron, the young officer dared not confess his dread of failing to please him. This man, so brave in ad-

versity, so bold on the field of battle, quaked as he thought of entering the Piombos' drawing-room. Ginevra felt him tremble, and this emotion, of which their happiness was the first cause, was to her a fresh proof of his love.

"How pale you are!" said she, as they reached the gate of the hôtel.

"Oh, Ginevra! If my life alone were at stake——"

Though Bartolomeo had been informed by his wife of this official introduction of his daughter's lover, he did not rise to meet him, but remained in the armchair he usually occupied, and the severity of his countenance was icy.

"Father," said Ginevra, "I have brought you a gentleman whom you will no doubt be pleased to see. Monsieur Louis, a soldier who fought quite close to the Emperor at Mont-Saint-Jean——"

The Baron rose, cast a furtive glance at Louis, and said in a sardonic tone:

"Monsieur wears no orders?"

"I no longer wear the Legion of Honor," replied Louis bashfully, and he humbly remained standing.

Ginevra, hurt by her father's rudeness, brought forward a chair. The officer's reply satisfied the old Republican. Madame Piombo, seeing that her husband's brows were recovering their natural shape, said, to revive the conversation, "Monsieur is wonderfully like Nina Porta. Do not you think that he has quite the face of a Porta?"

"Nothing can be more natural," replied the young man, on whom Piombo's flaming eyes were fixed. "Nina was my sister."

"You are Luigi Porta?" asked the old man.

"Yes."

Bartolomeo di Piombo rose, tottered, was obliged to lean on a chair, and looked at his wife. Elisa Piombo came up to him; then the two old folks silently left the room, arm in arm, with a look of horror at their daughter. Luigi Porta, quite bewildered, gazed at Ginevra, who turned as white as a marble statue, and remained with her eyes fixed on the

door where her father and mother had disappeared. There was something so solemn in her silence and their retreat, that, for the first time in his life perhaps, a feeling of fear came over him. She clasped her hands tightly together, and said in a voice so choked that it would have been inaudible to any one but a lover, "How much woe in one word!"

"In the name of our love, what have I said?" asked Luigi Porta.

"My father has never told me our deplorable history," she replied. "And when we left Corsica I was too young to know anything about it."

"Is it a Vendetta?" asked Luigi, trembling.

"Yes. By questioning my mother I learned that the Porta had killed my brothers and burned down our house. My father then massacred all your family. How did you survive, you whom he thought he had tied to the posts of a bed before setting fire to the house?"

"I do not know," replied Luigi. "When I was six I was taken to Genoa, to an old man named Colonna. No account of my family was ever given to me; I only knew that I was an orphan, and penniless. Colonna was like a father to me; I bore his name till I entered the army; then, as I needed papers to prove my identity, old Colonna told me that, helpless as I was, and hardly more than a child, I had enemies. He made me promise to take the name of Luigi only, to evade them."

"Fly, fly, Luigi," cried Ginevra. "Yet, stay; I must go with you. So long as you are in my father's house you are safe. As soon as you quit it, take care of yourself. You will go from one danger to another. My father has two Corsicans in his service, and if he does not threaten your life they will."

"Ginevra," he said, "and must this hatred exist between us?"

She smiled sadly and bowed her head. But she soon raised it again with a sort of pride, and said, "Oh, Luigi, our feelings must be very pure and true that I should have

the strength to walk in the path I am entering on. But it is for the sake of happiness which will last as long as life, is it not?"

Luigi answered only with a smile, and pressed her hand. The girl understood that only a great love could at such a moment scorn mere protestations. This calm and conscientious expression of Luigi's feelings seemed to speak for their strength and permanence. The fate of the couple was thus sealed. Ginevra foresaw many painful contests to be fought out, but the idea of deserting Louis—an idea which had perhaps floated before her mind—at once vanished. His, henceforth and for ever, she suddenly dragged him away and out of the house with a sort of violence, and did not quit him till they reached the house where Servin had taken a humble lodging for him.

When she returned to her father's house she had assumed the serenity which comes of a strong resolve. No change of manner revealed any uneasiness. She found her parents ready to sit down to dinner, and she looked at them with eyes devoid of defiance, and full of sweetness. She saw that her old mother had been weeping; at the sight of her red eyelids for a moment her heart failed her, but she hid her emotion. Piombo seemed to be a prey to anguish too keen, too concentrated to be shown by ordinary means of expression. The servants waited on a meal which no one ate. A horror of food is one of the symptoms indicative of a great crisis of the soul. All three rose without any one of them having spoken a word. When Ginevra was seated in the great, solemn drawing-room, between her father and mother, Piombo tried to speak, but he found no voice; he tried to walk about, but found no strength; he sat down again and rang the bell.

"Pietro," said he to the servant at last, "light the fire, I am cold."

Ginevra was shocked, and looked anxiously at her father. The struggle he was going through must be frightful; his face looked quite changed. Ginevra knew the extent of the

danger that threatened her, but she did not tremble; while the glances that Bartolomeo cast at his daughter seemed to proclaim that he was at this moment in fear of the character whose violence was his own work. Between these two everything must be in excess. And the certainty of the possible change of feeling between the father and daughter filled the Baroness' face with an expression of terror.

"Ginevra, you love the enemy of your family," said Piombo at last, not daring to look at his daughter.

"That is true," she replied.

"You must choose between him and us. Our Vendetta is part of ourselves. If you do not espouse my cause, you are not of my family."

"My choice is made," said Ginevra, in a steady voice.

His daughter's calmness misled Bartolomeo.

"Oh, my dear daughter!" cried the old man, whose eyelids were moist with tears, the first, the only tears he ever shed in his life.

"I shall be his wife," she said abruptly.

Bartolomeo could not see for a moment; but he recovered himself and replied, "This marriage shall never be so long as I live. I will never consent." Ginevra kept silence. "But, do you understand," the Baron went on, "that Luigi is the son of the man who killed your brothers?"

"He was six years old when the crime was committed; he must be innocent of it," she answered.

"A Porta!" cried Bartolomeo.

"But how could I share this hatred?" said the girl eagerly. "Did you bring me up in the belief that a Porta was a monster? Could I imagine that even one was left of those you had killed? Is it not in nature that you should make your Vendetta give way to my feelings?"

"A Porta!" repeated Piombo. "If his father had found you then in your bed, you would not be alive now. He would have dealt you a hundred deaths."

"Possibly," she said. "But his son has given me more than life. To see Luigi is a happiness without which I can-

not live. Luigi has revealed to me the world of feeling. I have, perhaps, seen even handsomer faces than his, but none ever charmed me so much. I have, perhaps, heard voices—no, no, never one so musical! Luigi loves me. He shall be my husband."

"Never!" said Piombo. "Ginevra, I would sooner see you in your coffin!"

The old man rose, and paced the room with hurried strides, uttering fierce words, with pauses between that betrayed all his indignation.

"You think, perhaps, that you can bend my will? Undeceive yourself. I will not have a Porta for my son-in-law. That is my decision. Never speak of the matter again. I am Bartolomeo di Piombo, do you hear, Ginevra?"

"Do you attach any mysterious meaning to the words?" she coldly asked.

"They mean that I have a dagger, and that I do not fear the justice of men. We Corsicans settle such matters with God."

"Well," said the girl, "I am Ginevra di Piombo, and I declare that in six months I will be Luigi Porta's wife.—You are a tyrant, father," she added, after an ominous pause.

Bartolomeo clenched his fists, and struck the marble chimney shelf.

"Ah! we are in Paris!" he muttered.

He said no more, but folded his arms and bowed his head on his breast; nor did he say another word the whole evening. Having asserted her will, the girl affected the most complete indifference; she sat down to the piano, sang, played the most charming music, with a grace and feeling that proclaimed her perfect freedom of mind, triumphing over her father, whose brow showed no relenting. The old man deeply felt this tacit insult, and at that moment gathered the bitter fruits of the education he had given his daughter. Respect is a barrier which protects the parents and the children alike, sparing those much sorrow, and these remorse.

The next day, as Ginevra was going out at the hour when

she usually went to the studio, she found the door of the house closed upon her; but she soon devised means for informing Luigi Porta of her father's severity. A waiting woman, who could not read, carried to the young officer a letter written by Ginevra. For five days the lovers contrived to correspond, thanks to the plots that young people of twenty can always contrive.

The father and daughter rarely spoke to each other. Both had in the bottom of their hearts an element of hatred; they suffered, but in pride and silence. Knowing well how strong were the bonds of love that tied them to each other, they tried to wrench them asunder, but without success. No sweet emotion ever came, as it had been wont, to give light to Bartolomeo's severe features when he gazed at his Ginevra, and there was something savage in her expression when she looked at her father. Reproach sat on her innocent brow; she gave herself up, indeed, to thoughts of happiness, but remorse sometimes dimmed her eyes. It was not, indeed, difficult to divine that she would never enjoy in peace a felicity which made her parents unhappy. In Bartolomeo, as in his daughter, all the irresolution arising from their native goodness of heart was doomed to shipwreck on their fierce pride and the revengeful spirit peculiar to Corsicans. They encouraged each other in their wrath, and shut their eyes to the future. Perhaps, too, each fancied that the other would yield.

On Ginevra's birthday, her mother, heart-broken at this disunion, which was assuming a serious aspect, planned to reconcile the father and daughter by an appeal to the memories of this anniversary. They were all three sitting in Bartolomeo's room. Ginevra guessed her mother's purpose from the hesitation written in her face, and she smiled sadly. At this instant a servant announced two lawyers, accompanied by several witnesses, who all came into the room. Bartolomeo stared at the men, whose cold, set faces were in themselves an insult to souls so fevered as those of the three principal actors in this scene. The old man turned uneasily to his daughter,

and saw on her face a smile of triumph which led him to suspect some catastrophe; but he affected, as savages do, to preserve a deceitful rigidity, while he looked at the two lawyers with a sort of apathetic curiosity. At a gesture of invitation from the old man the visitors took seats.

"Monsieur is no doubt Baron di Piombo?" said the elder of the two lawyers.

Bartolomeo bowed. The lawyer gave his head a little jerk, looked at Ginevra with the sly expression of a bailiff nabbing a debtor; then he took out his snuff-box, opened it, and, taking a pinch of snuff, absorbed it in little sniffs while considering the opening words of his discourse; and while pronouncing them he made constant pauses, an oratorical effect which a dash in printing represents very imperfectly.

"Monsieur," said he, "I am Monsieur Roguin, notary to mademoiselle, your daughter, and we are here—my colleague and I—to carry out the requirements of the law, and—to put an end to the divisions which—as it would seem—have arisen—between you and mademoiselle, your daughter—on the question—of—her—marriage with Monsieur Luigi Porta." This speech, made in a pedantic style, seemed, no doubt, to Monsieur Roguin much too fine to be understood all in a moment, and he stopped, while looking at Bartolomeo with an expression peculiar to men of business, and which is half-way between servility and familiarity. Lawyers are so much used to feign interest in the persons to whom they speak that their features at last assume a grimace which they can put on and off with their official pallium. This caricature of friendliness, so mechanical as to be easily detected, irritated Bartolomeo to such a pitch that it took all his self-control not to throw Monsieur Roguin out of the window; a look of fury emphasized his wrinkles, and on seeing this the notary said to himself: "I am making an effect."

"But," he went on in a honeyed voice, "Monsieur le Baron, on such occasions as these, our intervention must always, at first, be essentially conciliatory.—Have the kindness to listen to me.—It is in evidence that Mademoiselle Ginevra Piombo

—has to-day—attained the age at which, after a 'respectful summons,' she may proceed to the solemnization of her marriage—notwithstanding that her parents refuse their consent. Now—it is customary in families—which enjoy a certain consideration—which move in society—and preserve their dignity—people, in short, to whom it is important not to let the public into the secret of their differences—and who also do not wish to do themselves an injury by blighting the future lives of a young husband and wife—for that is doing themselves an injury. It is the custom, I was saying—in such highly respectable families—not to allow the serving of such a summons—which must be—which always is a record of a dispute—which at last ceases to exist. For as soon, monsieur, as a young lady has recourse to a 'respectful summons' she proclaims a determination so obstinate—that her father —and her mother——" he added, turning to the Baroness, "can have no further hope of seeing her follow their advice.—Hence the parental prohibition being nullified—in the first place by this fact—and also by the decision of the law—it is always the case that a wise father, after finally remonstrating with his child, allows her the liberty——"

Monsieur Roguin paused, perceiving that he might talk on for two hours without extracting an answer; and he also felt a peculiar agitation as he looked at the man he was trying to convince. An extraordinary change had come over Bartolomeo's countenance. All its lines were set, giving him an expression of indescribable cruelty, and he glared at the lawyer like a tiger. The Baroness sat mute and passive. Ginevra, calm and resolute, was waiting; she knew that the notary's voice was stronger than hers, and she seemed to have made up her mind to keep silence. At the moment when Roguin ceased speaking, the scene was so terrible that the witnesses, as strangers, trembled; never, perhaps, had such a silence weighed on them. The lawyers looked at each other as if in consultation, then they rose and went to the window.

"Did you ever come across clients made to this pattern?" asked Roguin of his colleague.

"There is nothing to be got out of him," said the younger man. "In your place I should read the summons and nothing more. The old man is no joke; he is choleric, and you will gain nothing by trying to discuss matters with him."

Monsieur Roguin therefore read aloud from a sheet of stamped paper a summons ready drawn up, and coldly asked Bartolomeo what his reply was.

"Are there laws in France then that upset a father's authority?" asked the Corsican.

"Monsieur——" said Roguin, smoothly.

"That snatch a child from her father?"

"Monsieur——"

"That rob an old man of his last consolation?"

"Monsieur, your daughter belongs to you only so long——"

"That kill her?"

"Monsieur, allow me."

There is nothing more hideous than the cold-blooded and close reasoning of a lawyer in the midst of such scenes of passion as they are usually mixed up with. The faces which Piombo saw seemed to him to have escaped from Hell; his cold and concentrated rage knew no bounds at the moment when his little opponent's calm and almost piping voice uttered that fatal, "Allow me." He sprang at a long dagger which hung from a nail over the chimney-piece, and rushed at his daughter. The younger of the two lawyers and one of the witnesses threw themselves between him and Ginevra; but Bartolomeo brutally knocked them over, showing them a face of fire and glowing eyes which seemed more terrible than the flash of the dagger. When Ginevra found herself face to face with her father, she looked at him steadily with a glance of triumph, went slowly towards him, and knelt down.

"No, no! I cannot!" he exclaimed, flinging away the weapon with such force that it stuck fast in the wainscot.

"Mercy, then, mercy!" said she. "You hesitate to kill me, but you refuse me life. Oh, father, I never loved you so well

—but give me Luigi. I ask your consent on my knees; a daughter may humble herself to her father. My Luigi, or I must die!"

The violent excitement that choked her prevented her saying more; she found no voice; her convulsive efforts plainly showed that she was between life and death. Bartolomeo roughly pushed her away.

"Go," he said, "the wife of Luigi Porta cannot be a Piombo. I no longer have a daughter! I cannot bring myself to curse you, but I give you up. You have now no father. My Ginevra Piombo is buried then!" he exclaimed in a deep tone, as he clutched at his heart.—"Go, I say, wretched girl," he went on after a moment's silence. "Go, and never let me see you again."

He took Ginevra by the arm, and in silence led her out of the house.

"Luigi!" cried Ginevra, as she went into the humble room where the officer was lodged, "my Luigi, we have no fortune but out love."

"We are richer than all the kings of the earth," he replied.

"My father and mother have cast me out," said she with deep melancholy.

"I will love you for them."

"Shall we be very happy?" she cried, with a gaiety that had something terrible in it.

"And for ever!" he answered, clasping her to his heart.

On the day following that on which Ginevra had quitted her father's house, she went to beg Madame Servin to grant her protection and shelter till the time, fixed by law, when she could be married to Luigi. There began her apprenticeship to the troubles which the world strews in the way of those who do not obey its rules. Madame Servin, who was greatly distressed at the injury that Ginevra's adventure had done the painter, received the fugitive coldly, and explained to her with circumspect politeness that she was not to count on her support. Too proud to insist, but amazed at such selfishness, to which she was unaccustomed, the young Cor-

sican went to lodge in a furnished house as near as possible to Luigi's. The son of the Portas spent all his days at the feet of his beloved; his youthful love, and the purity of his mind, dispersed the clouds which her father's reprobation had settled on the banished daughter's brow; and he painted the future as so fair that she ended by smiling, though she could not forget her parents' severity.

One morning the maid of the house brought up to her several trunks containing dress-stuffs, linen, and a quantity of things needful for a young woman settling for the first time. In this she recognized the foreseeing kindness of a mother; for as she examined these gifts, she found a purse into which the Baroness had put some money belonging to Ginevra, adding all her own savings. With the money was a letter, in which she implored her daughter to give up her fatal purpose of marrying, if there were yet time. She had been obliged, she said, to take unheard-of precautions to get this small assistance conveyed to Ginevra; she begged her not to accuse her of hardness if henceforth she left her neglected; she feared she could do no more for her; she blessed her, hoped she might find happiness in this fatal marriage if she persisted, and assured her that her one thought was of her beloved daughter. At this point tears had blotted out many words of the letter.

"Oh, mother!" cried Ginevra, quite overcome.

She felt a longing to throw herself at her mother's feet, to see her, to breathe the blessed air of home; she was on the point of rushing off when Luigi came in. She looked at him, and filial affection vanished, her tears were dried, she could not find it in her to leave the unhappy and loving youth. To be the sole hope of a noble soul, to love and to desert it—such a sacrifice is treason of which no young heart is capable. Ginevra had the generosity to bury her grief at the bottom of her soul.

At last the day of their wedding came. Ginevra found no one near her. Luigi took advantage of the moment when she was dressing to go in search of the necessary witnesses to

their marriage act. These were very good people. One of them, an old quartermaster of hussars, had, when in the army, found himself under such obligations to Luigi as an honest man never forgets; he had became a job-master, and had several hackney carriages. The other, a builder, was the proprietor of the house where the young couple were to lodge. Each of these brought a friend, and all four came with Luigi to fetch the bride. Unaccustomed as they were to social grimacing, seeing nothing extraordinary in the service they were doing to Luigi, these men were decently but quite plainly dressed, and there was nothing to proclaim the gay escort of a wedding. Ginevra herself was very simply clad, to be in keeping with her fortune; but, nevertheless, there was something so noble and impressive in her beauty that at the sight of her the words died on the lips of the good folks who had been prepared to pay her some compliment; they bowed respectfully, and she bowed in return; they looked at her in silence, and could only admire her. Joy can only express itself among equals. So, as fate would have it, all was gloomy and serious around the lovers; there was nothing to reflect their happiness.

The church and the mairie were not far away. The two Corsicans, followed by the four witnesses required by law, decided to go on foot, with a simplicity which robbed this great event of social life of all parade. In the courtyard of the mairie they found a crowd of carriages, which announced a numerous party within. They went upstairs and entered a large room, where the couples who were to be made happy on this particular day were awaiting the *Maire* of that quarter of Paris with considerable impatience. Ginevra sat down by Luigi on the end of a long bench, and their witnesses remained standing for lack of seats. Two brides, pompously arrayed in white, loaded with ribbons and lace and pearls, and crowned with bunches of orange-blossom of which the sheeny buds quivered under their veils, were surrounded by their families and accompanied by their mothers, to whom they turned with looks at once timid and satisfied; every eye

reflected their happiness, and every face seemed to exhale benedictions. Fathers, witnesses, brothers, and sisters were coming and going like a swarm of insects playing in a sunbeam which soon must vanish. Every one seemed to understand the preciousness of this brief hour in life when the heart stands poised between two hopes—the wishes of the past, the promise of the future.

At this sight Ginevra felt her heart swell, and she pressed Luigi's arm. He gave her a look, and a tear rose to the young man's eye; he never saw more clearly than at that moment all that his Ginevra had sacrificed for him. That rare tear made the young girl forget the forlorn position in which she stood. Love poured treasures of light between the lovers, who from that moment saw nothing but each other in the midst of the confusion.

Their witnesses, indifferent to the ceremonial, were quietly discussing business matters.

"Oats are very dear," said the quartermaster to the mason.

"They have not yet gone up so high as plaster in proportion," said the builder. And they walked round the large room.

"What a lot of time we are losing here!" exclaimed the mason, putting a huge silver watch back into his pocket.

Luigi and Ginevra, clinging to each other, seemed to be but one person. A poet would certainly have admired these two heads, full of the same feeling, alike in coloring, melancholy and silent in the presence of the two buzzing wedding-parties, of four excited families sparkling with diamonds and flowers, and full of gaiety which seemed a mere effervescence. All the joys of which these loud and gorgeous groups made a display, Luigi and Ginevra kept buried at the bottom of their hearts. On one side was the coarse clamor of pleasure; on the other the delicate silence of happy souls: earth and heaven.

But Ginevra trembled, and could not altogether shake off her woman's weakness. Superstitious, as Italians are, she regarded this contrast as an omen, and in the depths of her heart she harbored a feeling of dread, as unconquerable as her love itself.

Suddenly an official in livery threw open the double doors; silence fell, and his voice sounded like a yelp as he called out the names of Monsieur Luigi Porta and Mademoiselle Ginevra Piombo. This incident caused the pair some embarrassment. The celebrity of the name of Piombo attracted attention; the spectators looked about them for a wedding-party which must surely be a splendid one. Ginevra rose; her eyes, thunderous with pride, subdued the crowd, she took Luigi's arm, and went forward with a firm step, followed by the witnesses. A murmur of astonishment which rapidly grew louder, and whispering on all sides, reminded Ginevra that the world was calling her to account for her parents' absence. Her father's curse seemed to be pursuing her.

"Wait for the families of the bride and bridegroom," said the Maire to the clerk, who at once began to read the contracts.

"The father and mother enter a protest," said the clerk indifferently.

"On both sides?" asked the Maire.

"The man is an orphan."

"Where are the witnesses?"

"They are here," said the clerk, pointing to the four motionless and silent men who stood like statues, with their arms crossed.

"But if the parents protest——?" said the Maire.

"The 'respectful summons' has been presented in due form," replied the man, rising to place the various documents in the functionary's hands.

This discussion in an office seemed to brand them, and in a few words told a whole history. The hatred of the Porta and the Piombo, all these terrible passions, were thus recorded on a page of a register, as the annals of a nation may be inscribed on a tombstone in a few lines, nay, even in a single name: Robespierre or Napoleon. Ginevra was trembling. Like the dove crossing the waters, which had no rest for her foot but in the ark, her eyes could take refuge only in Luigi's, for all else was cold and sad. The

Maire had a stern, disapproving look, and his clerk stared at the couple with ill-natured curiosity. Nothing ever had less the appearance of a festivity. Like all the other events of human life when they are stripped of their accessories, it was a simple thing in itself, immense in its idea.

After some questions, to which they replied, the Maire muttered a few words, and then, having signed their names in the register, Luigi and Ginevra were man and wife. The young Corsicans, whose union had all the poetry which genius has consecrated in Romeo and Juliet, went away between two lines of jubilant relations to whom they did not belong, and who were out of patience at the delay caused by a marriage apparently so forlorn. When the girl found herself in the courtyard and under the open sky, a deep sigh broke from her very heart.

"Oh, will a whole life of love and devotion suffice to repay my Ginevra for her courage and tenderness?" said Luigi.

At these words, spoken with tears of joy, the bride forgot all her suffering, for she had suffered in showing herself to the world claiming a happiness which her parents refused to sanction.

"Why do men try to come between us?" she said, with a simplicity of feeling that enchanted Luigi.

Gladness made them more light-hearted. They saw neither the sky, nor the earth, nor the houses, and flew on wings to the church. At last they found themselves in a small, dark chapel, and in front of a humble altar where an old priest married them. There, as at the mairie, they were pursued by the two weddings that persecuted them with their splendor. The church, filled with friends and relations, rang with the noise made by carriages, beadles, porters, and priests. Altars glittered with ecclesiastical magnificence; the crowns of orange-blossom that decked the statues of the Virgin seemed quite new. Nothing was to be seen but flowers, with perfumes, gleaming tapers, and velvet cushions embroidered with gold. God seemed to have a share in this rapture of a day.

When the symbol of eternal union was to be held above the heads of Luigi and Ginevra—the yoke of white satin which for some is so soft, so bright, so light, and for the greater number is made of lead—the priest looked round in vain for two young boys to fill the happy office; two of the witnesses took their place. The priest gave the couple a hasty discourse on the dangers of life, and on the duties they must one day inculcate in their children, and he here took occasion to insinuate a reflection on the absence of Ginevra's parents; then having united them in the presence of God, as the Maire had united them in the presence of the Law, he ended the mass, and left them.

"God bless them," said Vergniaud to the mason at the church door. "Never were two creatures better made for each other. That girl's parents are wretches. I know no braver soldier than Colonel Luigi! If all the world had behaved as he did, *L'autre** would still be with us."

The soldier's blessing, the only one breathed for them this day, fell like balm on Ginevra's heart.

They all parted with shaking of hands, and Luigi cordially thanked his landlord.

"Good-bye, old fellow," said Luigi to the quartermaster. "And thank you."

"At your service, Colonel, soul and body, horses and chaises—all that is mine is yours."

"How well he loves you!" said Ginevra.

Luigi eagerly led his wife home to the house they were to live in; they soon reached the modest apartment, and there, when the door was closed, Luigi took her in his arms, exclaiming, "Oh, my Ginevra—for you are mine now—here is our real festival! Here," he went on, "all will smile on us."

Together they went through the three rooms which composed their dwelling. The entrance hall served as drawing-room and dining-room. To the right was a bedroom, to the left a sort of large closet which Luigi had arranged for his

* Napoleon.

beloved wife, where she found easels, her paint-box, some casts, models, lay figures, pictures, portfolios, in short, all the apparatus of an artist.

"Here I shall work," said she, with childlike glee.

She looked for a long time at the paper and the furniture, constantly turning to Luigi to thank him, for there was a kind of magnificence in this humble retreat; a bookcase contained Ginevra's favorite books, and there was a piano. She sat down on an ottoman, drew Luigi to her side, and clasping his hand, "You have such good taste," said she, in a caressing tone.

"Your words make me very happy," he replied.

"But, come, let us see everything," said Ginevra, from whom Luigi had kept the secret of this little home.

They went into a bridal chamber that was as fresh and white as a maiden.

"Oh! come away," said Luigi, laughing.

"But I must see everything," and Ginevra imperiously went on, examining all the furniture with the curiosity of an antiquary studying a medal. She touched the silk stuff and scrutinized everything with the childlike delight of a bride turning over the treasures of the *corbeille* brought her by her husband.

"We have begun by ruining ourselves," she said in a half-glad, half-regretful tone.

"It is true; all my arrears of pay are there," replied Luigi. "I sold it to a good fellow named Gigonnet.

"Why?" she asked, in a reproachful voice, which betrayed, however, a secret satisfaction. "Do you think I should be less happy under a bare roof? Still," she went on, "it is all very pretty, and it is ours!"

Luigi looked at her with such enthusiasm that she cast down her eyes, and said, "Let us see the rest."

Above these three rooms, in the attics, were a workroom for Luigi, a kitchen, and a servant's room. Ginevra was content with her little domain, though the view was limited by the high wall of a neighboring house, and the courtyard

on which the rooms looked was gloomy. But the lovers were so glad of heart, hope so beautified the future, that they would see nothing but enchantment in their mysterious dwelling. They were buried in this huge house, lost in the immensity of Paris, like two pearls in their shell, in the bosom of the deep sea. For any one else it would have been a prison; to them it was Paradise.

The first days of their married life were given to love; it was too difficult for them to devote themselves at once to work, and they could not resist the fascination of their mutual passion. Luigi would recline for hours at his wife's feet, admiring the color of her hair, the shape of her forehead, the exquisite setting of her eyes, the purity and whiteness of the arched brow beneath which they slowly rose or fell, expressing the happiness of satisfied love. Ginevra stroked her Luigi's locks, never tiring of gazing at what she called, in one of her own phrases, the *beltà folgorante* of the young man, and his delicately cut features; always fascinated by the dignity of his manners, while always charming him by the grace of her own. They played like children with the merest trifles, these trifles always brought them back to their passion, and they ceased playing only to lapse into the day dreams of *far niente.* An air sung by Ginevra would reproduce for them the exquisite hues of their love.

Or, matching their steps as they had matched their souls, they wandered about the country, finding their love in everything, in the flowers, in the sky, in the heart of the fiery glow of the setting sun; they read it even in the changing clouds that were tossed on the winds. No day was ever like the last, their love continued to grow because it was true. In a very few days they had proved each other, and had instinctively perceived that their souls were of such a temper that their inexhaustible riches seemed to promise ever new joys for the future. This was love in all its fresh candor, with its endless prattle, its unfinished sentences, its long silences, its Oriental restfulness and ardor. Luigi and Ginevra had wholly understood love. Is not love like the

sea, which, seen superficially or in haste, is accused of monotony by vulgar minds, while certain privileged beings can spend all their life admiring it and finding in it changeful phenomena which delight them?

One day, however, prudence dragged the young couple from their Garden of Eden; they must work for their living. Ginevra, who had a remarkable talent for copying pictures, set to work to produce copies, and formed a connection among dealers. Luigi, too, eagerly sought some occupation; but it was difficult for a young officer, whose talents were limited to a thorough knowledge of tactics, to find any employment in Paris. At last, one day when, weary of his vain efforts, he felt despair in his soul at seeing that the whole burden of providing for their existence rested on Ginevra, it occurred to him that he might earn something by his handwriting, which was beautiful. With a perseverance, of which his wife had set the example, he went to ask work of the attorneys, the notaries, and the pleaders of Paris. The frankness of his manners and his painful situation greatly interested people in his favor, and he got enough copying to be obliged to employ youths under him. Presently he took work on a larger scale. The income derived from this office-work and the price of Ginevra's paintings put the young household on a footing of comfort, which they were proud of as the fruit of their own industry.

This was the sunniest period of their life. The days glided swiftly by between work and the happiness of love. In the evening after working hard they found themselves happy in Ginevra's cell. Music then consoled them for their fatigues. No shade of melancholy ever clouded the young wife's features, and she never allowed herself to utter a lament. She could always appear to her Luigi with a smile on her lips and a light in her eyes. Each cherished a ruling thought which would have made them take pleasure in the hardest toil: Ginevra told herself she was working for Luigi, and Luigi for Ginevra. Sometimes, in her husband's absence, the young wife would think of the perfect joy it would have been

if this life of love might have been spent in the sight of her father and mother; then she would sink into deep melancholy, and feel all the pangs of remorse; dark pictures would pass like shadows before her fancy; she would see her old father alone, or her mother weeping in the evenings, and hiding her tears from the inexorable Piombo. Those two grave, white heads would suddenly rise up before her, and she fancied she would never see them again but in the fantastical light of memory. This idea haunted her like a presentiment.

She kept the anniversary of their wedding by giving her husband a portrait he had often wished for—that of his Ginevra. The young artist had never executed so remarkable a work. Apart from the likeness, which was perfect, the brilliancy of her beauty, the purity of her feelings, the happiness of love, were rendered with a kind of magic. The masterpiece was hung up with due ceremony.

They spent another year in the midst of comfort. The history of their life can be told in these words: "They were happy." No event occurred deserving to be related.

At the beginning of the winter of 1819 the picture-dealers advised Ginevra to bring them something else than copies, as, in consequence of the great competition, they could no longer sell them to advantage. Madame Porta acknowledged the mistake she had made in not busying herself with genre pictures which would have won her a name; she undertook to paint portraits; but she had to contend against a crowd of artists even poorer than herself. However, as Luigi and Ginevra had saved some money, they did not despair of the future. At the end of this same winter Luigi was working without ceasing. He, too, had to compete with rivals; the price of copying had fallen so low that he could no longer employ assistants, and was compelled to give up more time to his labor to earn the same amount. His wife had painted several pictures which were not devoid of merit, but dealers were scarcely buying even those of artists of repute. Ginevra offered them for almost nothing, and could not sell them.

The situation of the household was something terrible; the souls of the husband and wife floated in happiness, love loaded them with its treasures; poverty rose up like a skeleton in the midst of this harvest of joys, and they hid their alarms from each other. When Ginevra felt herself on the verge of tears as she saw Luigi suffering, she heaped caresses on him; Luigi, in the same way, hid the blackest care in his heart, while expressing the fondest devotion to Ginevra. They sought some compensation for their woes in the enthusiasm of their feelings, and their words, their joys, their playfulness, were marked by a kind of frenzy. They were alarmed at the future. What sentiment is there to compare in strength with a passion which must end to-morrow—killed by death or necessity? When they spoke of their poverty, they felt the need of deluding each other, and snatched at the smallest hope with equal eagerness.

One night Ginevra sought in vain for Luigi at her side, and got up quite frightened. A pale gleam reflected from the dingy wall of the little courtyard led her to guess that her husband sat up to work at night. Luigi waited till his wife was asleep to go up to his workroom. The clock struck four. Ginevra went back to bed and feigned sleep; Luigi came back, overwhelmed by fatigue and want of sleep, and Ginevra gazed sadly at the handsome face on which labor and anxiety had already traced some lines.

"And it is for me that he spends the night in writing," she thought, and she wept.

An idea came to dry her tears: she would imitate Luigi. That same day she went to a rich print-seller, and by the help of a letter of recommendation to him that she had obtained from Elie Magus, a picture-dealer, she got some work in coloring prints. All day she painted and attended to her household cares, then at night she colored prints. These two beings, so tenderly in love, got into bed only to get out of it again. Each pretended to sleep, and out of devotion to the other stole away as soon as one had deceived the other. One night Luigi, knocked over by a sort of fever caused by

work, of which the burden was beginning to crush him, threw open the window of his workroom to inhale the fresh morning air, and shake off his pain, when, happening to look down, he saw the light thrown on the wall by Ginevra's lamp; the unhappy man guessed the truth; he went downstairs, walking softly, and discovered his wife in her studio coloring prints.

"Oh, Ginevra," he exclaimed.

She started convulsively in her chair, and turned scarlet.

"Could I sleep while you were wearing yourself out with work?" said she.

"But I alone have a right to work so hard."

"And can I sit idle?" replied the young wife, whose eyes filled with tears, "when I know that every morsel of bread almost costs us a drop of your blood? I should die if I did not add my efforts to yours. Ought we not to have everything in common, pleasures and pains?"

"She is cold!" cried Luigi, in despair. "Wrap your shawl closer over your chest, my Ginevra, the night is damp and chilly."

They went to the window, the young wife leaning her head on her beloved husband's shoulder, he with his arm round her, sunk in deep silence, and watching the sky which dawn was slowly lighting up.

Gray clouds swept across in quick succession, and the east grew brighter by degrees.

"See," said Ginevra, "it is a promise—we shall be happy."

"Yes, in Heaven!" replied Luigi, with a bitter smile. "Oh, Ginevra! you who deserved all the riches of earth . . ."

"I have your heart!" said she in a glad tone.

"Ah, and I do not complain," he went on, clasping her closely to him. And he covered the delicate face with kisses; it was already beginning to lose the freshness of youth, but the expression was so tender and sweet that he could never look at it without feeling comforted.

"How still!" said Ginevra. "I enjoy sitting late, my dearest. The majesty of night is really contagious; it is im-

pressive, inspiring; there is something strangely solemn in the thought: all sleeps, but I am awake."

"Oh, my Ginevra, I feel, not for the first time, the refined grace of your soul—but, see, this is daybreak, come and sleep."

"Yes," said she, "if I am not the only one to sleep. I was miserable indeed the night when I discovered that my Luigi was awake and at work without me."

The valor with which the young people defied misfortune for some time found a reward. But the event which usually crowns the joys of a household was destined to be fatal to them. Ginevra gave birth to a boy who, to use a common phrase, was as beautiful as the day. The feeling of motherhood doubled the young creature's strength. Luigi borrowed money to defray the expenses of her confinement. Thus, just at first, she did not feel all the painfulness of their situation, and the young parents gave themselves up to the joy of rearing a child. This was their last gleam of happiness. Like two swimmers who unite their forces to stem a current, the Corsicans at first struggled bravely; but sometimes they gave themselves up to an apathy resembling the torpor that precedes death, and they soon were obliged to sell their little treasures.

Poverty suddenly stood before them, not hideous, but humbly attired, almost pleasant to endure; there was nothing appalling in her voice; she did not bring despair with her, nor spectres, nor squalor, but she made them forget the traditions and the habit of comfort; she broke the mainsprings of pride. Then came misery in all its horror, reckless of her rags, and trampling every human feeling under foot. Seven or eight months after the birth of little Bartolomeo it would have been difficult to recognize the original of the beautiful portrait, the sole adornment of their bare room, in the mother who was suckling a sickly baby. Without any fire in bitter winter weather, Ginevra saw the soft outlines of her face gradually disappear, her cheeks became as white as porcelain, her eyes colorless, as though the springs

of life were drying up in her. And watching her starved and pallid infant, she suffered only in his young misery, while Luigi had not the heart even to smile at his boy.

"I have scoured Paris," he said in a hollow voice. "I know no one, and how can I dare beg of strangers? Vergniaud, the horse-breeder, my old comrade in Egypt, is implicated in some conspiracy, and has been sent to prison; besides, he had lent me all he had to lend. As to the landlord, he has not asked me for any rent for more than a year."

"But we do not want for anything," Ginevra gently answered, with an affectation of calmness.

"Each day brings some fresh difficulty," replied Luigi, with horror.

Luigi took all Ginevra's paintings, the portrait, some furniture which they yet could dispense with, and sold them all for a mere trifle; the money thus obtained prolonged their sufferings for a little while. During these dreadful days Ginevra showed the sublime heights of her character, and the extent of her resignation. She bore the inroads of suffering with stoical firmness. Her vigorous soul upheld her under all ills; with a weak hand she worked on by her dying child, fulfilled her household duties with miraculous activity, and was equal to everything. She was even happy when she saw on Luigi's lips a smile of surprise at the look of neatness she contrived to give to the one room to which they had been reduced.

"I have kept you a piece of bread, dear," she said one evening when he came in tired.

"And you?"

"I have dined, dear Luigi; I want nothing." And the sweet expression of her face, even more than her words, urged him to accept the food of which she had deprived herself. Luigi embraced her with one of the despairing kisses which friends gave each other in 1793 as they mounted the scaffold together. In such moments as these two human creatures see each other heart to heart. Thus the unhappy Luigi, understanding at once that his wife was fasting, felt the fever

that was undermining her; he shivered, and went out on the pretext of pressing business, for he would rather have taken the most insidious poison than escape death by eating the last morsel of bread in the house.

He wandered about Paris among the smart carriages, in the midst of the insulting luxury that is everywhere flaunted; he hurried past the shops of the money-changers where gold glitters in the window; finally, he determined to sell himself, to offer himself as a substitute for the conscription, hoping by this sacrifice to save Ginevra, and that during his absence she might be taken into favor again by Bartolomeo. So he went in search of one of the men who deal in these white slaves, and felt a gleam of happiness at recognizing in him an old officer of the Imperial Guard.

"For two days I have eaten nothing," he said, in a slow, weak voice. "My wife is dying of hunger, and never utters a complaint; she will die, I believe, with a smile on her lips. For pity's sake, old comrade," he added, with a forlorn smile, "pay for me in advance; I am strong, I have left the service, and I——"

The officer gave Luigi something on account of the sum he promised to get for him. The unhappy man laughed convulsively when he grasped a handful of gold pieces, and ran home as fast as he could go, panting, and exclaiming as he went, "Oh, my Ginevra—Ginevra!"

It was growing dark by the time he reached home. He went in softly, fearing to over-excite his wife, whom he had left so weak; the last pale rays of sunshine, coming in at the dormer-window, fell on Ginevra's face. She was asleep in her chair with her baby at her breast.

"Wake up, my darling," said he, without noticing the attitude of the child, which seemed at this moment to have a supernatural glory.

On hearing his voice, the poor mother opened her eyes, met Luigi's look, and smiled; but Luigi gave a cry of terror. He hardly recognized his half-crazed wife, to whom he showed the gold, with a gesture of savage vehemence.



"Wake up, my darling," said he



Ginevra began to laugh mechanically, but suddenly she cried in a terrible voice, "Louis, the child is cold!"

She looked at the infant and fainted. Little Bartolomeo was dead.

Luigi took his wife in his arms, without depriving her of the child, which she clutched to her with incomprehensible strength, and after laying her on the bed he went out to call for help.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed to his landlord, whom he met on the stairs, "I have money, and my child is dead of hunger, and my wife is dying. Help us."

In despair he went back to his wife, leaving the worthy builder and various neighbors to procure whatever might relieve the misery of which till now they had known nothing, so carefully had the Corsicans concealed it out of a feeling of pride. Luigi had tossed the gold pieces on the floor, and was kneeling by the bed where his wife lay.

"Father, take charge of my son, who bears your name!" cried Ginevra in her delirium.

"Oh, my angel, be calm," said Luigi, kissing her, "better days await us!" His voice and embrace restored her to some composure.

"Oh, my Louis," she went on, looking at him with extraordinary fixity, "listen to me. I feel that I am dying. My death is quite natural. I have been suffering too much; and then happiness so great as mine had to be paid for. Yes, my Luigi, be comforted. I have been so happy that if I had to begin life again, I would again accept our lot. I am a bad mother; I weep for you even more than for my child.—My child!" she repeated in a full, deep voice. Two tears dropped from her dying eyes, and she suddenly clasped yet closer the little body she could not warm. "Give my hair to my father in memory of his Ginevra," she added. "Tell him that I never, never accused him——"

Her head fell back on her husband's arm.

"No, no, you cannot die!" cried Luigi. "A doctor is coming. We have food. Your father will receive you into favor.

Prosperity is dawning on us. Stay with us, angel of beauty!"

But that faithful and loving heart was growing cold. Ginevra instinctively turned her eyes on the man she adored, though she was no longer conscious of anything; confused images rose before her mind, fast losing all memories of earth. She knew that Luigi was there, for she clung more and more tightly to his ice-cold hand, as if to hold herself up above a gulf into which she feared to fall.

"You are cold, dear," she said presently; "I will warm you."

She tried to lay her husband's hand over her heart, but she was dead. Two doctors, a priest, and some neighbors came in at this moment, bringing everything that was needful to save the lives of the young couple and to soothe their despair. At first these intruders made a good deal of noise, but when they were all in the room an appalling silence fell.

While this scene was taking place Bartolomeo and his wife were sitting in their old armchairs, each at one corner of the immense fireplace that warmed the great drawing-room of their mansion. The clock marked midnight. It was long since the old couple had slept well. At this moment they were silent, like two old folks in their second childhood, who look at everything and see nothing. The deserted room, to them full of memories, was feebly lighted by a single lamp fast dying out. But for the dancing flames on the hearth they would have been in total darkness. One of their friends had just left them, and the chair on which he had sat during his visit stood between the old people. Piombo had already cast more than one glance at this chair, and these glances, fraught with thoughts, followed each other like pangs of remorse, for the empty chair was Ginevra's. Elisa Piombo watched the expressions that passed across her husband's pale face. Though she was accustomed to guess the Corsican's feelings from the violent changes in his features, they were to-night by turns so threatening and so sad that she failed to read this inscrutable soul.

Was Bartolomeo yielding to the overwhelming memories aroused by that chair? Was he pained at perceiving that it had been used by a stranger for the first time since his daughter's departure? Had the hour of mercy, the hour so long and vainly hoped for, struck at last?

These reflections agitated the heart of Elisa Piombo. For a moment her husband's face was so terrible that she quaked at having ventured on so innocent a device to give her an opportunity of speaking of Ginevra. At this instant the northerly blast flung the snowflakes against the shutters with such violence that the old people could hear their soft pelting. Ginevra's mother bent her head to hide her tears from her husband. Suddenly a sigh broke from the old man's heart; his wife looked at him; he was downcast. For the second time in three years she ventured to speak to him of his daughter.

"Supposing Ginevra were cold!" she exclaimed in an undertone. "Or perhaps she is hungry," she went on. The Corsican shed a tear. "She has a child, and cannot suckle it—her milk is dried up——" the mother added vehemently, with an accent of despair.

"Let her come, oh, let her come!" cried Piombo. "Oh, my darling child, you have conquered me."

The mother rose, as if to go to fetch her daughter. At this instant the door was flung open, and a man, whose face had lost all semblance to humanity, suddenly stood before them.

"Dead!—Our families were doomed to exterminate each other; for this is all that remains of her," he said, laying on the table Ginevra's long, black hair.

The two old people started, as though they had been struck by a thunderbolt; they could not see Luigi.

"He has spared us a pistol shot, for he is dead," said Bartolomeo, deliberately, as he looked on the ground.

PARIS, *January* 1830

COLONEL CHABERT

To Madame la Comtesse Ida de Bocarmé née *du Chasteler.*

"Hullo! There is that old Box-coat again!"

This exclamation was made by a lawyer's clerk of the class called in French offices a gutter-jumper—a messenger in fact—who at this moment was eating a piece of dry bread with a hearty appetite. He pulled off a morsel of crumb to make into a bullet, and fired it gleefully through the open pane of the window against which he was leaning. The pellet, well aimed, rebounded almost as high as the window, after hitting the hat of a stranger who was crossing the courtyard of a house in the Rue Vivienne, where dwelt Maître Derville, attorney-at-law.

"Come, Simonnin, don't play tricks on people, or I will turn you out of doors. However poor a client may be, he is still a man, hang it all!" said the head clerk, pausing in the addition of a bill of costs.

The lawyer's messenger is commonly, as was Simonnin, a lad of thirteen or fourteen, who, in every office, is under the special jurisdiction of the managing clerk, whose errands and *billets-doux* keep him employed on his way to carry writs to the bailiffs and petitions to the Courts. He is akin to the street boy in his habits, and to the pettifogger by fate. The boy is almost always ruthless, unbroken, unmanageable, a ribald rhymester, impudent, greedy, and idle. And yet, almost all these clerklings have an old mother lodging on some fifth floor with whom they share their pittance of thirty or forty francs a month.

"If he is a man, why do you call him old Box-coat?" asked Simonnin, with the air of a schoolboy who has caught out his master.

And he went on eating his bread and cheese, leaning his shoulder against the window jamb; for he rested standing like a cab-horse, one of his legs raised and propped against the other, on the toe of his shoe.

"What trick can we play that cove?" said the third clerk, whose name was Godeschal, in a low voice, pausing in the middle of a discourse he was extemporizing in an appeal engrossed by the fourth clerk, of which copies were being made by two neophytes from the provinces.

Then he went on improvising:

"*But, in his noble and beneficent wisdom, his Majesty, Louis the Eighteenth*—(write it at full length, heh! Desroches the learned—you, as you engross it!)—*when he resumed the reins of Government, understood*—(what did that old nincompoop ever understand?)—*the high mission to which he had been called by Divine Providence!*—(a note of admiration and six stops. They are pious enough at the Courts to let us put six)—*and his first thought, as is proved by the date of the order hereinafter designated, was to repair the misfortunes caused by the terrible and sad disasters of the revolutionary times, by restoring to his numerous and faithful adherents*—('numerous' is flattering, and ought to please the Bench)—*all their unsold estates, whether within our realm, or in conquered or acquired territory, or in the endowments of public institutions, for we are, and proclaim ourselves competent to declare, that this is the spirit and meaning of the famous, truly loyal order given in*—Stop," said Godeschal to the three copying clerks, "that rascally sentence brings me to the end of my page.—Well," he went on, wetting the back fold of the sheet with his tongue, so as to be able to fold back the page of thick stamped paper, "well, if you want to play him a trick, tell him that the master can only see his clients between two and three in the morning; we shall see if he cames, the old ruffian!"

And Godeschal took up the sentence he was dictating—"*given in*—Are you ready?"

"Yes," cried the three writers.

It all went on together, the appeal, the gossip, and the conspiracy.

"*Given in*—Here, Daddy Boucard, what is the date of the order? We must dot our *i*'s and cross our *t*'s, by Jingo! it helps to fill the pages."

"By Jingo!" repeated one of the copying clerks before Boucard, the head clerk, could reply.

"What! have you written *by Jingo?*" cried Godeschal, looking at one of the novices, with an expression at once stern and humorous.

"Why, yes," said Desroches, the fourth clerk, leaning across his neighbor's copy, "he has written '*We must dot our i's*' and spelt it *by Gingo!*"

All the clerks shouted with laughter.

"Why! Monsieur Huré, you take 'By Jingo' for a law term, and you say you come from Mortagne!" exclaimed Simonnin.

"Scratch is cleanly out," said the head clerk. "If the judge, whose business it is to tax the bill, were to see such things, he would say you were laughing at the whole boiling. You would hear of it from the chief! Come, no more of this nonsense, Monsieur Huré! A Norman ought not to write out an appeal without thought. It is the 'Shoulder arms!' of the law."

"*Given in—in?*" asked Godeschal.—"Tell me when, Boucard."

"June 1814," replied the head clerk, without looking up from his work.

A knock at the office door interrupted the circumlocutions of the prolix document. Five clerks with rows of hungry teeth, bright. mocking eyes, and curly heads, lifted their noses towards the door, after crying all together in a singing tone, "Come in!"

Boucard kept his face buried in a pile of papers—*broutilles* (odds and ends) in French law jargon—and went on drawing out the bill of costs on which he was busy.

The office was a large room furnished with the traditional

stool which is to be seen in all these dens of law-quibbling. The stove-pipe crossed the room diagonally to the chimney of a bricked-up fireplace; on the marble chimney-piece were several chunks of bread, triangles of Brie cheese, pork cutlets, glasses, bottles, and the head clerk's cup of chocolate. The smell of these dainties blended so completely with that of the immoderately overheated stove and the odor peculiar to offices and old papers, that the trail of a fox would not have been perceptible. The floor was covered with mud and snow, brought in by the clerks. Near the window stood the desk with a revolving lid, where the head clerk worked, and against the back of it was the second clerk's table. The second clerk was at this moment in Court. It was between eight and nine in the morning.

The only decoration of the office consisted in huge yellow posters, announcing seizures of real estate, sales, settlements under trust, final or interim judgments,—all the glory of a lawyer's office. Behind the head clerk was an enormous stack of pigeon-holes from the top to the bottom of the room, of which each division was crammed with bundles of papers with an infinite number of tickets hanging from them at the ends of red tape, which give a peculiar physiognomy to law papers. The lower rows were filled with cardboard boxes, yellow with use, on which might be read the names of the more important clients whose cases were juicily stewing at this present time. The dirty window-panes admitted but little daylight. Indeed, there are very few offices in Paris where it is possible to write without lamplight before ten in the morning in the month of February, for they are all left to very natural neglect; every one comes and no one stays; no one has any personal interest in a scene of mere routine—neither the attorney, nor the counsel, nor the clerks, trouble themselves about the appearance of a place which, to the youths, is a schoolroom; to the clients, a passage; to the chief, a laboratory. The greasy furniture is handed down to successive owners with such scrupulous care, that in some offices may still be seen boxes of *re-*

mainders, machines for twisting parchment gut, and bags left by the prosecuting parties of the Châtelet (abbreviated to *Chlet*)—a Court which, under the old order of things, represented the present Court of First Instance (or County Court).

So in this dark office, thick with dust, there was, as in all its fellows, something repulsive to the clients—something which made it one of the most hideous monstrosities of Paris. Nay, were it not for the mouldy sacristies where prayers are weighed out and paid for like groceries, and for the old-clothes shops, where flutter the rags that blight all the illusions of life by showing us the last end of all our festivities—an attorney's office would be, of all social marts, the most loathsome. But we might say the same of the gambling-hell, of the Law Court, of the lottery office, of the brothel.

But why? In these places, perhaps, the drama being played in a man's soul makes him indifferent to accessories, which would also account for the single-mindedness of great thinkers and men of great ambitions.

"Where is my penknife?"

"I am eating my breakfast."

"You go and be hanged! here is a blot on the copy."

"Silence, gentlemen!"

These various exclamations were uttered simultaneously at the moment when the old client shut the door with the sort of humility which disfigures the movements of a man down on his luck. The stranger tried to smile, but the muscles of his face relaxed as he vainly looked for some symptoms of amenity on the inexorably indifferent faces of the six clerks. Accustomed, no doubt, to gauge men, he very politely addressed the gutter-jumper, hoping to get a civil answer from this boy of all work.

"Monsieur, is your master at home?"

The pert messenger made no reply, but patted his ear with the fingers of his left hand, as much as to say, "I am deaf."

"What do you want, sir?" asked Godeschal, swallowing as

he spoke a mouthful of bread big enough to charge a four-pounder, flourishing his knife and crossing his legs, throwing up one foot in the air to the level of his eyes.

"This is the fifth time I have called," replied the victim. "I wish to speak to M. Derville."

"On business?"

"Yes, but I can explain it to no one but——"

"M. Derville is in bed; if you want to consult him on some difficulty, he does no serious work till midnight. But if you will lay the case before us, we could help you just as well as he can to——"

The stranger was unmoved; he looked timidly about him, like a dog who has got into a strange kitchen and expects a kick. By grace of their profession, lawyers' clerks have no fear of thieves; they did not suspect the owner of the box-coat, and left him to study the place, where he looked in vain for a chair to sit on, for he was evidently tired. Attorneys, on principle, do not have many chairs in their offices. The inferior client, being kept waiting on his feet, goes away grumbling, but then he does not waste time, which, as an old lawyer once said, is not allowed for when the bill is taxed.

"Monsieur," said the old man, "as I have already told you, I cannot explain my business to any one but M. Derville. I will wait till he is up."

Boucard had finished his bill. He smelt the fragrance of his chocolate, rose from his cane armchair, went to the chimney-piece, looked the old man from head to foot, stared at his coat, and made an indescribable grimace. He probably reflected that whichever way his client might be wrung, it would be impossible to squeeze out a centime, so he put in a few brief words to rid the office of a bad customer.

"It is the truth, monsieur. The chief only works at night. If your business is important, I recommend you to return at one in the morning." The stranger looked at the head clerk with a bewildered expression, and remained motionless for a moment. The clerks, accustomed to every change of

countenance, and the odd whimsicalities to which indecision or absence of mind gives rise in "parties," went on eating, making as much noise with their jaws as horses over a manger, and paying no further heed to the old man.

"I will come again to-night," said the stranger at length, with the tenacious desire, peculiar to the unfortunate, to catch humanity at fault.

The only irony allowed to poverty is to drive Justice and Benevolence to unjust denials. When a poor wretch has convicted Society of falsehood, he throws himself more eagerly on the mercy of God.

"What do you think of that for a cracked pot?" said Simonnin, without waiting till the old man had shut the door.

"He looks as if he had been buried and dug up again," said a clerk.

"He is some colonel who wants his arrears of pay," said the head clerk.

"No, he is a retired concierge," said Godeschal.

"I bet you he is a nobleman," cried Boucard.

"I bet you he has been a porter," retorted Godeschal. "Only porters are gifted by nature with shabby box-coats, as worn and greasy and frayed as that old body's. And did you see his trodden-down boots that let the water in, and his stock which serves for a shirt? He has slept in a dry arch."

"He may be of noble birth, and yet have pulled the door-latch," cried Desroches. "It has been known!"

"No," Boucard insisted, in the midst of laughter, "I maintain that he was a brewer in 1789, and a colonel in the time of the Republic."

"I bet theatre tickets round that he never was a soldier," said Godeschal.

"Done with you," answered Boucard.

"Monsieur! Monsieur!" shouted the little messenger, opening the window.

"What are you at now, Simonnin?" asked Boucard.

"I am calling him that you may ask him whether he is a colonel or a porter; he must know."

All the clerks laughed. As to the old man, he was already coming upstairs again.

"What can we say to him?" cried Godeschal.

"Leave it to me," replied Boucard.

The poor man came in nervously, his eyes cast down, perhaps not to betray how hungry he was by looking too greedily at the eatables.

"Monsieur," said Boucard, "will you have the kindness to leave your name, so that M. Derville may know——"

"Chabert."

"The Colonel who was killed at Eylau?" asked Huré, who, having so far said nothing, was jealous of adding a jest to all the others.

"The same, monsieur," replied the good man, with antique simplicity. And he went away.

"Whew!"

"Done brown!"

"Poof!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"Boum!"

"The old rogue!"

"Ting-a-ring-ting!"

"Sold again!"

"Monsieur Desroches, you are going to the play without paying," said Huré to the fourth clerk, giving him a slap on the shoulder that might have killed a rhinoceros.

There was a storm of cat-calls, cries, and exclamations, which all the onomatopeia of the language would fail to represent.

"Which theatre shall we go to?"

"To the opera," cried the head clerk.

"In the first place," said Godeschal, "I never mentioned which theatre. I might, if I chose, take you to see Madame Saqui."

"Madame Saqui is not the play."

"What is a play?" replied Godeschal. "First, we must define the point of fact. What did I bet, gentlemen? A play. What is a play? A spectacle. What is a spectacle? Something to be seen——"

"But on that principle you would pay your bet by taking us to see the water run under the Pont Neuf!" cried Simonnin, interrupting him.

"To be seen for money," Godeschal added.

"But a great many things are to be seen for money that are not plays. The definition is defective," said Desroches.

"But do listen to me!"

"You are talking nonsense, my dear boy," said Boucard.

"Is Curtius' a play?" said Godeschal.

"No," said the head clerk, "it is a collection of figures—but it is a spectacle."

"I bet you a hundred francs to a sou," Godeschal resumed, "that Curtius' Waxworks forms such a show as might be called a play or theatre. It contains a thing to be seen at various prices, according to the place you choose to occupy."

"And so on, and so forth!" said Simonnin.

"You mind I don't box your ears!" said Godeschal.

The clerks shrugged their shoulders.

"Besides, it is not proved that that old ape was not making game of us," he said, dropping his argument, which was drowned in the laughter of the other clerks. "On my honor, Colonel Chabert is really and truly dead. His wife is married again to Comte Ferraud, Councillor of State. Madame Ferraud is one of our clients."

"Come, the case is remanded till to-morrow," said Boucard. "To work, gentlemen. The deuce is in it; we get nothing done here. Finish copying that appeal; it must be handed in before the sitting of the Fourth Chamber, judgment is to be given to-day. Come, on you go!"

"If he really were Colonel Chabert, would not that impudent rascal Simonnin have felt the leather of his boot in the right place when he pretended to be deaf?" said Des-

roches, regarding this remark as more conclusive than Godeschal's.

"Since nothing is settled," said Boucard, "let us all agree to go to the upper boxes of the Français and see Talma in 'Nero.' Simonnin may go to the pit."

And thereupon the head clerk sat down at his table, and the others followed his example.

"*Given in June eighteen hundred and fourteen* (in words)," said Godeschal. "Ready?"

"Yes," replied the two copying-clerks and the engrosser, whose pens forthwith began to creak over the stamped paper, making as much noise in the office as a hundred cockchafers imprisoned by schoolboys in paper cages.

"*And we hope that my lords on the Bench,*" the extemporizing clerk went on. "Stop! I must read my sentence through again. I do not understand it myself."

"Forty-six (that must often happen) and three forty-nines," said Boucard.

"*We hope,*" Godeschal began again, after reading all through the document, "*that my lords on the Bench will not be less magnanimous than the august author of the decree, and that they will do justice against the miserable claims of the acting committee of the chief Board of the Legion of Honor by interpreting the law in the wide sense we have here set forth——*"

"Monsieur Godeschal, wouldn't you like a glass of water?" said the little messenger.

"That imp of a boy!" said Boucard. "Here, get on your double-soled shanks-mare, take this packet, and spin off to the Invalides."

"*Here set forth,*" Godeschal went on. "Add *in the interest of Madame la Vicomtesse* (at full length) *de Grandlieu.*"

"What!" cried the chief, "are you thinking of drawing up an appeal in the case of Vicomtesse de Grandlieu against the Legion of Honor—a case for the office to stand or fall by? You are something like an ass! Have the goodness to put aside your copies and your notes; you may keep all

that for the case of Navarreins against the Hospitals. It is late. I will draw up a little petition myself, with a due allowance of 'inasmuch,' and go to the Courts myself."

This scene is typical of the thousand delights which, when we look back on our youth, make us say, "Those were ~ood times."

At about one in the morning Colonel Chabert, self-styled, knocked at the door of Maître Derville, attorney to the Court of First Instance in the Department of the Seine. The porter told him that Monsieur Derville had not yet come in. The old man said he had an appointment, and was shown upstairs to the rooms occupied by the famous lawyer, who, notwithstanding his youth, was considered to have one of the longest heads in Paris.

Having rung, the distrustful applicant was not a little astonished at finding the head clerk busily arranging in a convenient order on his master's dining-room table the papers relating to the cases to be tried on the morrow. The clerk, not less astonished, bowed to the Colonel and begged him to take a seat, which the client did.

"On my word, monsieur, I thought you were joking yesterday when you named such an hour for an interview," said the old man, with the forced mirth of a ruined man, who does his best to smile.

"The clerks were joking, but they were speaking the truth too," replied the man, going on with his work. "M. Derville chooses this hour for studying his cases, taking stock of their possibilities, arranging how to conduct them, deciding on the line of defence. His prodigious intellect is freer at this hour—the only time when he can have the silence and quiet needed for the conception of good ideas. Since he entered the profession, you are the third person to come to him for a consultation at this midnight hour. After coming in the chief will discuss each case, read everything, spend four or five hours perhaps over the business, then he will ring for me and explain to me his intentions. In the morning from

ten till two he hears what his clients have to say, then he spends the rest of his day in appointments. In the evening he goes into society to keep up his connections. So he has only the night for undermining his cases, ransacking the arsenal of the Code, and laying his plan of battle. He is determined never to lose a case; he loves his art. He will not undertake every case, as his brethren do. That is his life, an exceptionally active one. And he makes a great deal of money.

As he listened to this explanation, the old man sat silent, and his strange face assumed an expression so bereft of intelligence, that the clerk, after looking at him, thought no more about him.

A few minutes later Derville came in, in evening dress; his head clerk opened the door to him, and went back to finish arranging the papers. The young lawyer paused for a moment in amazement on seeing in the dim light the strange client who awaited him. Colonel Chabert was as absolutely immovable as one of the wax figures in Curtius' collection to which Godeschal had proposed to treat his fellow-clerks. This quiescence would not have been a subject for astonishment if it had not completed the supernatural aspect of the man's whole person. The old soldier was dry and lean. His forehead, intentionally hidden under a smoothly combed wig, gave him a look of mystery. His eyes seemed shrouded in a transparent film; you would have compared them to dingy mother-of-pearl with a blue iridescence changing in the gleam of the wax lights. His face, pale, livid, and as thin as a knife, if I may use such a vulgar expression, was as the face of the dead. Round his neck was a tight black silk stock.

Below the dark line of this rag the body was so completely hidden in shadow that a man of imagination might have supposed the old head was due to some chance play of light and shade, or have taken it for a portrait by Rembrandt, without a frame. The brim of the hat which covered the old man's brow cast a black line of shadow on the upper part

of the face. This grotesque effect, though natural, threw into relief by contrast the white furrows, the cold wrinkles, the colorless tone of the corpse-like countenance. And the absence of all movement in the figure, of all fire in the eye, were in harmony with a certain look of melancholy madness, and the deteriorating symptoms characteristic of senility, giving the face an indescribably ill-starred look which no human words could render.

But an observer, especially a lawyer, could also have read in this stricken man the signs of deep sorrow, the traces of grief which had worn into this face, as drops of water from the sky falling on fine marble at last destroy its beauty. A physician, an author, or a judge might have discerned a whole drama at the sight of its sublime horror, while the least charm was its resemblance to the grotesques which artists amuse themselves by sketching on a corner of the lithographic stone while chatting with a friend.

On seeing the attorney, the stranger started, with the convulsive thrill that comes over a poet when a sudden noise rouses him from a fruitful reverie in silence and at night. The old man hastily removed his hat and rose to bow to the young man; the leather lining of his hat was doubtless very greasy; his wig stuck to it without his noticing it, and left his head bare, showing his skull horribly disfigured by a scar beginning at the nape of the neck and ending over the right eye, a prominent seam all across his head. The sudden removal of the dirty wig which the poor man wore to hide this gash gave the two lawyers no inclination to laugh, so horrible to behold was this riven skull. The first idea suggested by the sight of this old wound was, "His intelligence must have escaped through that cut."

"If this is not Colonel Chabert, he is some thorough-going trooper!" thought Boucard.

"Monsieur," said Derville, "to whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"To Colonel Chabert."

"Which?"

"He who was killed at Eylau," replied the old man.

On hearing this strange speech, the lawyer and his clerk glanced at each other, as much as to say, "He is mad."

"Monsieur," the Colonel went on, "I wish to confide to you the secret of my position."

A thing well worthy of note is the natural intrepidity of lawyers. Whether from the habit of receiving a great many persons, or from the deep sense of the protection conferred on them by the law, or from confidence in their mission, they enter everywhere, fearing nothing, like priests and physicians. Derville signed to Boucard, who vanished.

"During the day, sir," said the attorney, "I am not so miserly of my time, but at night every minute is precious. So be brief and concise. Go to the facts without digression. I will ask for any explanations I may consider necessary. Speak."

Having bid his strange client to be seated, the young man sat down at the table; but while he gave his attention to the deceased Colonel, he turned over the bundles of papers.

"You know, perhaps," said the dead man, "that I commanded a cavalry regiment at Eylau. I was of important service to the success of Murat's famous charge which decided the victory. Unhappily for me, my death is a historical fact, recorded in *Victoires et Conquêtes,* where it is related in full detail. We cut through the three Russian lines, which at once closed up and formed again, so that we had to repeat the movement back again. At the moment when we were nearing the Emperor, after having scattered the Russians, I came against a squadron of the enemy's cavalry. I rushed at the obstinate brutes. Two Russian officers, perfect giants, attacked me both at once. One of them gave me a cut across the head that crashed through everything, even a black silk cap I wore next my head, and cut deep into the skull. I fell from my horse. Murat came up to support me. He rode over my body, he and all his men, fifteen hundred of them—there might have been more! My death was announced to the Emperor, who as a precaution—for he was

fond of me, was the Master—wished to know if there were no hope of saving the man he had to thank for such a vigorous attack. He sent two surgeons to identify me and bring me into Hospital, saying, perhaps too carelessly, for he was very busy, 'Go and see whether by any chance poor Chabert is still alive.' These rascally saw-bones, who had just seen me lying under the hoofs of the horses of two regiments, no doubt did not trouble themselves to feel my pulse, and reported that I was quite dead. The certificate of death was probably made out in accordance with the rules of military jurisprudence."

As he heard his visitor express himself with complete lucidity, and relate a story so probable though so strange, the young lawyer ceased fingering the papers, rested his left elbow on the table, and with his head on his hand looked steadily at the Colonel.

"Do you know, monsieur, that I am lawyer to the Comtesse Ferraud," he said, interrupting the speaker, "Colonel Chabert's widow?"

"My wife—yes, monsieur. Therefore, after a hundred fruitless attempts to interest lawyers, who have all thought me mad, I made up my mind to come to you. I will tell you of my misfortunes afterwards; for the present, allow me to prove the facts, explaining rather how things must have fallen out rather than how they did occur. Certain circumstances, known, I suppose, to no one but the Almighty, compel me to speak of some things as hypothetical. The wounds I had received must presumably have produced tetanus, or have thrown me into a state analogous to that of a disease called, I believe, catalepsy. Otherwise how is it conceivable that I should have been stripped, as is the custom in time of war, and thrown into the common grave by the men ordered to bury the dead?

"Allow me here to refer to a detail of which I could know nothing till after the event, which, after all, I must speak of as my death. At Stuttgart, in 1814, I met an old quartermaster of my regiment. This dear fellow, the only man who

chose to recognize me, and of whom I will tell you more later, explained the marvel of my preservation, by telling me that my horse was shot in the flank at the moment when I was wounded. Man and beast went down together, like a monk cut out of card-paper. As I fell, to the right or to the left, I was no doubt covered by the body of my horse, which protected me from being trampled to death or hit by a ball.

"When I came to myself, monsieur, I was in a position and an atmosphere of which I could give you no idea if I talked till to-morrow. The little air there was to breathe was foul. I wanted to move, and found no room. I opened my eyes, and saw nothing. The most alarming circumstance was the lack of air, and this enlightened me as to my situation. I understood that no fresh air could penetrate to me, and that I must die. This thought took off the sense of intolerable pain which had aroused me. There was a violent singing in my ears. I heard—or I thought I heard, I will assert nothing—groans from the world of dead among whom I was lying. Some nights I still think I hear those stifled moans; though the remembrance of that time is very obscure, and my memory very indistinct, in spite of my impressions of far more acute suffering I was fated to go through, and which have confused my ideas.

"But there was something more awful than cries; there was a silence such as I have never known elsewhere—literally, the silence of the grave. At last, by raising my hands and feeling the dead, I discerned a vacant space between my head and the human carrion above. I could thus measure the space, granted by a chance of which I knew not the cause. It would seem that, thanks to the carelessness and the haste with which we had been pitched into the trench, two dead bodies had leaned across and against each other, forming an angle like that made by two cards when a child is building a card castle. Feeling about me at once, for there was no time for play, I happily felt an arm lying detached, the arm of a Hercules! A stout bone, to which I owed my rescue. But for this unhoped-for help, I must have perished. But

with a fury you may imagine, I began to work my way through the bodies which separated me from the layer of earth which had no doubt been thrown over us—I say us, as if there had been others living! I worked with a will, monsieur, for here I am! But to this day I do not know how I succeeded in getting through the pile of flesh which formed a barrier between me and life. You will say I had three arms. This crowbar, which I used cleverly enough, opened out a little air between the bodies I moved, and I economized my breath. At last I saw daylight, but through snow!

"At that moment I perceived that my head was cut open. Happily my blood, or that of my comrades, or perhaps the torn skin of my horse, who knows, had in coagulating formed a sort of natural plaster. But, in spite of it, I fainted away when my head came into contact with the snow. However, the little warmth left in me melted the snow about me; and when I recovered consciousness, I found myself in the middle of a round hole, where I stood shouting as long as I could. But the sun was rising, so I had very little chance of being heard. Was there any one in the fields yet? I pulled myself up, using my feet as a spring, resting on one of the dead, whose ribs were firm. You may suppose that this was not the moment for saying, 'Respect courage in misfortune!' In short, monsieur, after enduring the anguish, if the word is strong enough for my frenzy, of seeing for a long time, yes, quite a long time, those cursed Germans flying from a voice they heard where they could see no one, I was dug out by a woman, who was brave or curious enough to come close to my head, which must have looked as though it had sprouted from the ground like a mushroom. This woman went to fetch her husband, and between them they got me to their poor hovel.

"It would seem that I must have again fallen into a catalepsy—allow me to use the word to describe a state of which I have no idea, but which, from the account given by my hosts, I suppose to have been the effect of that malady. I remained for six months between life and death; not speak-

ing, or, if I spoke, talking in delirium. At last, my hosts got me admitted to the hospital at Heilsberg.

"You will understand, monsieur, that I came out of the womb of the grave as naked as I came from my mother's; so that six months afterwards, when I remembered, one fine morning, that I had been Colonel Chabert, and when, on recovering my wits, I tried to exact from my nurse rather more respect than she paid to any poor devil, all my companions in the ward began to laugh. Luckily for me, the surgeon, out of professional pride, had answered for my cure, and was naturally interested in his patient. When I told him coherently about my former life, this good man, named Sparchmann, signed a deposition, drawn up in the legal form of his country, giving an account of the miraculous way in which I had escaped from the trench dug for the dead, the day and hour when I had been found by my benefactress and her husband, the nature and exact spot of my injuries, adding to these documents a description of my person.

"Well, monsieur, I have neither these important pieces of evidence, nor the declaration I made before a notary at Heilsberg, with a view to establishing my identity. From the day when I was turned out of that town by the events of war, I have wandered about like a vagabond, begging my bread, treated as a madman when I have told my story, without ever having found or earned a sou to enable me to recover the deeds which would prove my statements, and restore me to society. My sufferings have often kept me for six months at a time in some little town, where every care was taken of the invalid Frenchman, but where he was laughed at to his face as soon as he said he was Colonel Chabert. For a long time that laughter, those doubts, used to put me into rages which did me harm, and which even led to my being locked up at Stuttgart as a madman. And, indeed, as you may judge from my story, there was ample reason for shutting a man up.

"At the end of two years' detention, which I was compelled

to submit to, after hearing my keepers say a thousand times, 'Here is a poor man who thinks he is Colonel Chabert' to people who would reply, 'Poor fellow!' I became convinced of the impossibility of my own adventure. I grew melancholy, resigned, and quiet, and gave up calling myself Colonel Chabert, in order to get out of my prison, and see France once more. Oh, monsieur! To see Paris again was a delirium which I——"

Without finishing his sentence, Colonel Chabert fell into a deep study, which Derville respected.

"One fine day," his visitor resumed, "one spring day, they gave me the key of the fields, as we say, and ten thalers, admitting that I talked quite sensibly on all subjects, and no longer called myself Colonel Chabert. On my honor, at that time, and even to this day, sometimes I hate my name. I wish I were not myself. The sense of my rights kills me. If my illness had but deprived me of all memory of my past life, I could be happy. I should have entered the service again under any name, no matter what, and should, perhaps, have been made Field-Marshal in Austria or Russia. Who knows?"

"Monsieur," said the attorney, "you have upset all my ideas. I feel as if I heard you in a dream. Pause for a moment, I beg of you."

"You are the only person," said the Colonel, with a melancholy look, "who ever listened to me so patiently. No lawyer has been willing to lend me ten napoleons to enable me to procure from Germany the necessary documents to begin my lawsuit——"

"What lawsuit?" said the attorney, who had forgotten his client's painful position in listening to the narrative of his past sufferings.

"Why, monsieur, is not the Comtesse Ferraud my wife? She has thirty thousand francs a year, which belong to me, and she will not give me a sou. When I tell lawyers these things—men of sense; when I propose—I, a beggar—to bring action against a Count and Countess; when I—a dead man—

bring up as against a certificate of death a certificate of marriage and registers of births, they show me out, either with the air of cold politeness, which you all know how to assume to rid yourself of a hapless wretch, or brutally, like men who think they have to deal with a swindler or a madman—it depends on their nature. I have been buried under the dead; but now I am buried under the living, under papers, under facts, under the whole of society, which wants to shove me underground again!"

"Pray resume your narrative," said Derville.

"'Pray resume it!'" cried the hapless old man, taking the young lawyer's hand. "That is the first polite word I have heard since——"

The Colonel wept. Gratitude choked his voice. The appealing and unutterable eloquence that lies in the eyes, in a gesture, even in silence, entirely convinced Derville, and touched him deeply.

"Listen, monsieur," said he; "I have this evening won three hundred francs at cards. I may very well lay out half that sum in making a man happy. I will begin the inquiries and researches necessary to obtain the documents of which you speak, and until they arrive I will give you five francs a day. If you are Colonel Chabert, you will pardon the smallness of the loan as coming from a young man who has his fortune to make. Proceed."

The Colonel, as he called himself, sat for a moment motionless and bewildered; the depth of his woes had no doubt destroyed his powers of belief. Though he was eager in pursuit of his military distinction, of his fortune, of himself, perhaps it was in obedience to the inexplicable feeling, the latent germ in every man's heart, to which we owe the experiments of alchemists, the passion for glory, the discoveries of astronomy and of physics, everything which prompts man to expand his being by multiplying himself through deeds or ideas. In his mind the *Ego* was now but a secondary object, just as the vanity of success or the pleasure of winning become dearer to the gambler than the object he has at stake.

The young lawyer's words were as a miracle to this man, for ten years repudiated by his wife, by justice, by the whole social creation. To find in a lawyer's office the ten gold pieces which had so long been refused him by so many people, and in so many ways! The Colonel was like the lady who, having been ill of a fever for fifteen years, fancied she had some fresh complaint when she was cured. There are joys in which we have ceased to believe; they fall on us, it is like a thunderbolt; they burn us. The poor man's gratitude was too great to find utterance. To superficial observers he seemed cold, but Derville saw complete honesty under this amazement. A swindler would have found his voice.

"Where was I?" said the Colonel, with the simplicity of a child or of a soldier, for there is often something of the child in a true soldier, and almost always something of the soldier in a child, especially in France.

"At Stuttgart. You were out of prison," said Derville.

"You know my wife?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes," said Derville, with a bow.

"What is she like?"

"Still quite charming."

The old man held up his hand, and seemed to be swallowing down some secret anguish with the grave and solemn resignation that is characteristic of men who have stood the ordeal of blood and fire on the battlefield.

"Monsieur," said he, with a sort of cheerfulness—for he breathed again, the poor Colonel; he had again risen from the grave; he had just melted a covering of snow less easily thawed than that which had once before frozen his head; and he drew a deep breath, as if he had just escaped from a dungeon—"Monsieur, if I had been a handsome young fellow, none of my misfortunes would have befallen me. Women believe in men when they flavor their speeches with the word Love. They hurry then, they come, they go, they are everywhere at once; they intrigue, they assert facts, they play the very devil for a man who takes their fancy. But how could I interest a woman? I had a face like a Requiem. I was

dressed like a *sans-culotte.* I was more like an Esquimaux than a Frenchman—I, who had formerly been considered one of the smartest of fops in 1799!—I, Chabert, Count of the Empire.

"Well, on the very day when I was turned out into the streets like a dog, I met the quartermaster of whom I just now spoke. This old soldier's name was Boutin. The poor devil and I made the queerest pair of broken-down hacks I ever set eyes on. I met him out walking; but though I recognized him, he could not possibly guess who I was. We went into a tavern together. In there, when I told him my name, Boutin's mouth opened from ear to ear in a roar of laughter, like the bursting of a mortar. That mirth, monsieur, was one of the keenest pangs I have known. It told me without disguise how great were the changes in me! I was, then, unrecognizable even to the humblest and most grateful of my former friends!

"I had once saved Boutin's life, but it was only the repayment of a debt I owed him. I need not tell you how he did me this service; it was at Ravenna, in Italy. The house where Boutin prevented my being stabbed was not extremely respectable. At that time I was not a colonel, but, like Boutin himself, a common trooper. Happily there were certain details of this adventure which could be known only to us two, and when I recalled them to his mind his incredulity diminished. I then told him the story of my singular experiences. Although my eyes and my voice, he told me, were strangely altered, although I had neither hair, teeth, nor eyebrows, and was as colorless as an Albino, he at last recognized his Colonel in the beggar, after a thousand questions, which I answered triumphantly.

"He related his adventures; they were not less extraordinary than my own; he had lately come back from the frontiers of China, which he had tried to cross after escaping from Siberia. He told me of the catastrophe of the Russian campaign, and of Napoleon's first abdication. That news was one of the things which caused me most anguish!

"We were two curious derelicts, having been rolled over the globe as pebbles are rolled by the ocean when storms bear them from shore to shore. Between us we had seen Egypt, Syria, Spain, Russia, Holland, Germany, Italy and Dalmatia, England, China, Tartary, Siberia; the only thing wanting was that neither of us had been to America or the Indies. Finally, Boutin, who still was more locomotive than I, undertook to go to Paris as quickly as might be to inform my wife of the predicament in which I was. I wrote a long letter full of details to Madame Chabert. That, monsieur, was the fourth! If I had had any relations, perhaps nothing of all this might have happened; but, to be frank with you, I am but a workhouse child, a soldier, whose sole fortune was his courage, whose sole family is mankind at large, whose country is France, whose only protector is the Almighty.—Nay, I am wrong! I had a father—the Emperor! Ah! if he were but here, the dear man! If he could see *his Chabert,* as he used to call me, in the state in which I am now, he would be in a rage! What is to be done? Our sun is set, and we are all out in the cold now. After all, political events might account for my wife's silence!

"Boutin set out. He was a lucky fellow! He had two bears, admirably trained, which brought him in a living. I could not go with him; the pain I suffered forbade my walking long stages. I wept, monsieur, when we parted, after I had gone as far as my state allowed in company with him and his bears. At Carlsruhe I had an attack of neuralgia in the head, and lay for six weeks on straw in an inn. I should never have ended if I were to tell you all the distresses of my life as a beggar. Moral suffering, before which physical suffering pales, nevertheless excites less pity, because it is not seen. I remember shedding tears, as I stood in front of a fine house in Strassburg where once I had given an entertainment, and where nothing was given me, not even a piece of bread. Having agreed with Boutin on the road I was to take, I went to every post-office to ask if there were a letter or some money for me. I arrived at Paris without

having found either. What despair I had been forced to endure! 'Boutin must be dead!' I told myself, and in fact the poor fellow was killed at Waterloo. I heard of his death later, and by mere chance. His errand to my wife had, of course, been fruitless.

"At last I entered Paris—with the Cossacks. To me this was grief on grief. On seeing the Russians in France, I quite forgot that I had no shoes on my feet nor money in my pocket. Yes, monsieur, my clothes were in tatters. The evening before I reached Paris I was obliged to bivouac in the woods of Claye. The chill of the night air no doubt brought on an attack of some nameless complaint which seized me as I was crossing the Faubourg Saint-Martin. I dropped almost senseless at the door of an ironmonger's shop. When I recovered I was in a bed in the Hôtel-Dieu. There I stayed very contentedly for about a month. I was then turned out; I had no money, but I was well, and my feet were on the good stones of Paris. With what delight and haste did I make my way to the Rue du Mont-Blanc, where my wife should be living in a house belonging to me! Bah! the Rue du Mont-Blanc was now the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; I could not find my house; it had been sold and pulled down. Speculators had built several houses over my gardens. Not knowing that my wife had married M. Ferraud, I could obtain no information.

"At last I went to the house of an old lawyer who had been in charge of my affairs. This worthy man was dead, after selling his connection to a younger man. This gentleman informed me, to my great surprise, of the administration of my estate, the settlement of the moneys, of my wife's marriage, and the birth of her two children. When I told him that I was Colonel Chabert, he laughed so heartily that I left him without saying another word. My detention at Stuttgart had suggested possibilities of Charenton, and I determined to act with caution. Then, monsieur, knowing where my wife lived, I went to her house, my heart high with hope.—Well," said the Colonel, with a gesture of concen-

trated fury, "when I called under an assumed name I was not admitted, and on the day when I used my own I was turned out of doors.

"To see the Countess come home from a ball or the play in the early morning, I have sat whole nights through, crouching close to the wall of her gateway. My eyes pierced the depths of the carriage, which flashed past me with the swiftness of lightning, and I caught a glimpse of the woman who is my wife and no longer mine. Oh, from that day I have lived for vengeance!" cried the old man in a hollow voice, and suddenly standing up in front of Derville. "She knows that I am alive; since my return she has had two letters written with my own hand. She loves me no more!—I—I know not whether I love or hate her. I long for her and curse her by turns. To me she owes all her fortune, all her happiness; well, she has not sent me the very smallest pittance. Sometimes I do not know what will become of me!"

With these words the veteran dropped on to his chair again and remained motionless. Derville sat in silence, studying his client.

"It is a serious business," he said at length, mechanically. "Even granting the genuineness of the documents to be procured from Heilsberg, it is not proved to me that we can at once win our case. It must go before three tribunals in succession. I must think such a matter over with a clear head; it is quite exceptional."

"Oh," said the Colonel, coldly, with a haughty jerk of his head, "if I fail, I can die—but not alone."

The feeble old man had vanished. The eyes were those of a man of energy, lighted up with the spark of desire and revenge.

"We must perhaps compromise," said the lawyer.

"Compromise!" echoed Colonel Chabert. "Am I dead, or am I alive?"

"I hope, monsieur," the attorney went on, "that you will follow my advice. Your cause is mine. You will soon perceive the interest I take in your situation, almost unexampled

in judicial records. For the moment I will give you a letter to my notary, who will pay you to your order fifty francs every ten days. It would be unbecoming for you to come here to receive alms. If you are Colonel Chabert, you ought to be at no man's mercy. I shall regard these advances as a loan; you have estates to recover; you are rich."

This delicate compassion brought tears to the old man's eyes. Derville rose hastily, for it was perhaps not correct for a lawyer to show emotion; he went into the adjoining room, and came back with an unsealed letter, which he gave to the Colonel. When the poor man held it in his hand, he felt through the paper two gold pieces.

"Will you be good enough to describe the documents, and tell me the name of the town, and in what kingdom?" said the lawyer.

The Colonel dictated the information, and verified the spelling of the names of places; then he took his hat in one hand, looked at Derville, and held out the other—a horny hand, saying with much simplicity:

"On my honor, sir, after the Emperor, you are the man to whom I shall owe most. You are a splendid fellow!"

The attorney clapped his hand into the Colonel's, saw him to the stairs, and held a light for him.

"Boucard," said Derville to his head clerk, "I have just listened to a tale that may cost me five and twenty louis. If I am robbed, I shall not regret the money, for I shall have seen the most consummate actor of the day."

When the Colonel was in the street and close to a lamp, he took the two twenty-franc pieces out of the letter and looked at them for a moment under the light. It was the first gold he had seen for nine years.

"I may smoke cigars!" he said to himself.

About three months after this interview, at night, in Derville's room, the notary commissioned to advance the half-pay on Derville's account to his eccentric client, came to consult the attorney on a serious matter, and began by begging

him to refund the six hundred francs that the old soldier had received.

"Are you amusing yourself with pensioning the old army?" said the notary, laughing—a young man named Crottat, who had just bought up the office in which he had been head clerk, his chief having fled in consequence of a disastrous bankruptcy.

"I have to thank you, my dear sir, for reminding me of that affair," replied Derville. "My philanthropy will not carry me beyond twenty-five louis; I have, I fear, already been the dupe of my patriotism."

As Derville finished the sentence, he saw on his desk the papers his head clerk had laid out for him. His eye was struck by the appearance of the stamps—long, square, and triangular, in red and blue ink, which distinguished a letter that had come through the Prussian, Austrian, Bavarian, and French post-offices.

"Ah ha!" said he with a laugh, "here is the last act of the comedy; now we shall see if I have been taken in!"

He took up the letter and opened it; but he could not read it; it was written in German.

"Boucard, go yourself and have this letter translated, and bring it back immediately," said Derville, half opening his study door, and giving the letter to the head clerk.

The notary at Berlin, to whom the lawyer had written, informed him that the documents he had been requested to forward would arrive within a few days of this note announcing them. They were, he said, all perfectly regular and duly witnessed, and legally stamped to serve as evidence in law. He also informed him that almost all the witnesses to the facts recorded under these affidavits were still to be found at Eylau, in Prussia, and that the woman to whom M. le Comte Chabert owed his life was still living in a suburb of Heilsberg.

"This looks like business," cried Derville, when Boucard had given him the substance of the letter. "But look here, my boy," he went on, addressing the notary, "I shall want

some information which ought to exist in your office. Was it not that old rascal Roguin——?"

"We will say that unfortunate, that ill-used Roguin," interrupted Alexandre Crottat with a laugh.

"Well, was it not that ill-used man who has just carried off eight hundred thousand francs of his clients' money, and reduced several families to despair, who effected the settlement of Chabert's estate? I fancy I have seen that in the documents in our case of Ferraud."

"Yes," said Crottat. "It was when I was third clerk; I copied the papers and studied them thoroughly. Rose Chapotel, wife and widow of Hyacinthe, called Chabert, Count of the Empire, grand officer of the Legion of Honor. They had married without settlement; thus, they held all the property in common. To the best of my recollection, the personalty was about six hundred thousand francs. Before his marriage, Comte Chabert had made a will in favor of the hospitals of Paris, by which he left them one-quarter of the fortune he might possess at the time of his decease, the State to take the other quarter. The will was contested, there was a forced sale, and then a division, for the attorneys went at a pace. At the time of the settlement the monster who was then governing France handed over to the widow, by special decree, the portion bequeathed to the treasury."

"So that Comte Chabert's personal fortune was no more than three hundred thousand francs?"

"Consequently so it was, old fellow!" said Crottat. "You lawyers sometimes are very clear-headed, though you are accused of false practices in pleading for one side or the other."

Colonel Chabert, whose address was written at the bottom of the first receipt he had given the notary, was lodging in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, Rue du Petit-Banquier, with an old quartermaster of the Imperial Guard, now a cowkeeper, named Vergniaud. Having reached the spot, Derville was obliged to go on foot in search of his client, for his coachman declined to drive along an unpaved street, where the ruts were rather too deep for cab wheels. Looking about

him on all sides, the lawyer at last discovered at the end of the street nearest to the boulevard, between two walls built of bones and mud, two shabby stone gate-posts, much knocked about by carts, in spite of two wooden stumps that served as blocks. These posts supported a cross beam with a pent-house coping of tiles, and on the beam, in red letters, were the words, "Vergniaud, dairyman." To the right of this inscription were some eggs, to the left a cow, all painted in white. The gate was open, and no doubt remained open all day. Beyond a good-sized yard there was a house facing the gate, if indeed the name of house may be applied to one of the hovels built in the neighborhood of Paris, which are like nothing else, not even the most wretched dwellings in the country, of which they have all the poverty without their poetry.

Indeed, in the midst of fields, even a hovel may have a certain grace derived from the pure air, the verdure, the open country—a hill, a serpentine road, vineyards, quickset hedges, moss-grown thatch and rural implements; but poverty in Paris gains dignity only by horror. Though recently built, this house seemed ready to fall into ruins. None of its materials had found a legitimate use; they had been collected from the various demolitions which are going on every day in Paris. On a shutter made of the boards of a shop-sign Derville read the words, "Fancy Goods." The windows were all mismatched and grotesquely placed. The ground floor, which seemed to be the habitable part, was on one side raised above the soil, and on the other sunk in the rising ground. Between the gate and the house lay a puddle full of stable litter, into which flowed the rain-water and house waste. The back wall of this frail construction, which seemed rather more solidly built than the rest, supported a row of barred hutches, where rabbits bred their numerous families. To the right of the gate was the cowhouse, with a loft above for fodder; it communicated with the house through the dairy. To the left was a poultry yard, with a stable and pig-styes, the roofs finished, like that of the house, with rough deal

boards nailed so as to overlap, and shabbily thatched with rushes.

Like most of the places where the elements of the huge meal daily devoured by Paris are every day prepared, the yard Derville now entered showed traces of the hurry that comes of the necessity for being ready at a fixed hour. The large pot-bellied tin cans in which milk is carried, and the little pots for cream, were flung pell-mell at the dairy door, with their linen-covered stoppers. The rags that were used to clean them, fluttered in the sunshine, riddled with holes, hanging to strings fastened to poles. The placid horse, of a breed known only to milk-women, had gone a few steps from the cart, and was standing in front of the stable, the door being shut. A goat was munching the shoots of a starved and dusty vine that clung to the cracked yellow wall of the house. A cat, squatting on the cream jars, was licking them over. The fowls, scared by Derville's approach, scuttered away screaming, and the watch-dog barked.

"And the man who decided the victory at Eylau is to be found here!" said Derville to himself, as his eyes took in at a glance the general effect of the squalid scene.

The house had been left in charge of three little boys. One, who had climbed to the top of a cart loaded with hay, was pitching stones into the chimney of a neighboring house, in the hope that they might fall into a saucepan; another was trying to get a pig into a cart by the back board, which rested on the ground; while the third, hanging on in front, was waiting till the pig had got into the cart, to hoist it by making the whole thing tilt. When Derville asked them if M. Chabert lived there, neither of them replied, but all three looked at him with a sort of bright stupidity, if I may combine those two words. Derville repeated his questions, but without success. Provoked by the saucy cunning of these three imps, he abused them with the sort of pleasantry which young men think they have a right to address to little boys, and they broke the silence with a horse-laugh. Then Derville was angry.

The Colonel, hearing him, now came out of a little low room, close to the dairy, and stood on the threshold of his doorway with indescribable military coolness. He had in his mouth a very finely-colored pipe—a technical phrase to a smoker—a humble, short clay pipe of the kind called *"brûle-gueule."* He lifted the peak of a dreadfully greasy cloth cap, saw Derville, and came straight across the midden to join his benefactor the sooner, calling out in friendly tones to the boys:

"Silence in the ranks!"

The children at once kept a respectful silence, which showed the power the old soldier had over them.

"Why did you not write to me?" he said to Derville. "Go along by the cowhouse! There—the path is paved there," he exclaimed, seeing the lawyer's hesitancy, for he did not wish to wet his feet in the manure heap.

Jumping from one dry spot to another, Derville reached the door by which the Colonel had come out. Chabert seemed but ill pleased at having to receive him in the bedroom he occupied; and, in fact, Derville found but one chair there. The Colonel's bed consisted of some trusses of straw, over which his hostess had spread two or three of those old fragments of carpet, picked up heaven knows where, which milk-women use to cover the seats of their carts. The floor was simply the trodden earth. The walls, sweating saltpetre, green with mould, and full of cracks, were so excessively damp that on the side where the Colonel's bed was a reed mat had been nailed. The famous box-coat hung on a nail. Two pairs of old boots lay in a corner. There was not a sign of linen. On the worm-eaten table the *Bulletins de la Grande Armée,* reprinted by Plancher, lay open, and seemed to be the Colonel's reading; his countenance was calm and serene in the midst of this squalor. His visit to Derville seemed to have altered his features; the lawyer perceived in them traces of a happy feeling, a particular gleam set there by hope.

"Does the smell of a pipe annoy you?" he said, placing the dilapidated straw-bottomed chair for his lawyer.

"But, Colonel, you are dreadfully uncomfortable here!"

The speech was wrung from Derville by the distrust natural to lawyers, and the deplorable experience which they derive early in life from the appalling and obscure tragedies at which they look on.

"Here," said he to himself, "is a man who has of course spent my money in satisfying a trooper's three theological virtues—play, wine, and women!"

"To be sure, monsieur, we are not distinguished for luxury here. It is a camp lodging, tempered by friendship, but——" And the soldier shot a deep glance at the man of law—"I have done no one wrong, I have never turned my back on anybody, and I sleep in peace."

Derville reflected that there would be some want of delicacy in asking his client to account for the sums of money he had advanced, so he merely said:

"But why would you not come to Paris, where you might have lived as cheaply as you do here, but where you would have been better lodged?"

"Why," replied the Colonel, "the good folks with whom I am living had taken me in and fed me *gratis* for a year. How could I leave them just when I had a little money? Besides, the father of those three pickles is an old *Egyptian*——"

"An Egyptian!"

"We give that name to the troopers who came back from the expedition into Egypt, of which I was one. Not merely are all who get back brothers; Vergniaud was in my regiment. We have shared a draught of water in the desert; and besides, I have not yet finished teaching his brats to read."

"He might have lodged you better for your money," said Derville.

"Bah!" said the Colonel, "his children sleep on the straw as I do. He and his wife have no better bed; they are very

poor, you see. They have taken a bigger business than they can manage. But if I recover my fortune . . . However, it does very well."

"Colonel, to-morrow, or next day, I shall receive your papers from Heilsberg. The woman who dug you out is still alive!"

"Curse the money! To think I haven't got any!" he cried, flinging his pipe on the ground.

Now, a well-colored pipe is to a smoker a precious possession; but the impulse was so natural, the emotion so generous, that every smoker, and the excise office itself, would have pardoned this crime of treason to tobacco. Perhaps the angels may have picked up the pieces.

"Colonel, it is an exceedingly complicated business," said Derville as they left the room to walk up and down in the sunshine.

"To me," said the soldier, "it appears exceedingly simple. I was thought to be dead, and here I am! Give me back my wife and my fortune; give me the rank of General, to which I have a right, for I was made Colonel of the Imperial Guard the day before the battle of Eylau."

"Things are not done so in the legal world," said Derville. "Listen to me. You are Colonel Chabert, I am glad to think it; but it has to be proved judicially to persons whose interest it will be to deny it. Hence, your papers will be disputed. That contention will give rise to ten or twelve preliminary inquiries. Every question will be sent under contradiction up to the supreme court, and give rise to so many costly suits, which will hang on for a long time, however eagerly I may push them. Your opponents will demand an inquiry, which we cannot refuse, and which may necessitate the sending of a commission of investigation to Prussia. But even if we hope for the best; supposing that justice should at once recognize you as Colonel Chabert—can we know how the questions will be settled that will arise out of the very innocent bigamy committed by the Comtesse Ferraud?

"In your case, the point of law is unknown to the Code,

and can only be decided as a point in equity, as a jury decides in the delicate cases presented by the social eccentricities of some criminal prosecutions. Now, you had no children by your marriage; M. le Comte Ferraud has two. The judges might pronounce against the marriage where the family ties are weakest, to the confirmation of that where they are stronger, since it was contracted in perfect good faith. Would you be in a very becoming moral position if you insisted, at your age, and in your present circumstances, in resuming your rights over a woman who no longer loves you? You will have both your wife and her husband against you, two important persons who might influence the Bench. Thus, there are many elements which would prolong the case; you will have time to grow old in the bitterest regrets."

"And my fortune?"

"Do you suppose you had a fine fortune?"

"Had I not thirty thousand francs a year?"

"My dear Colonel, in 1799 you made a will before your marriage, leaving one-quarter of your property to hospitals."

"That is true."

"Well, when you were reported dead, it was necessary to make a valuation, and have a sale, to give this quarter away. Your wife was not particular about honesty to the poor. The valuation, in which she no doubt took care not to include the ready money or jewelry, or too much of the plate, and in which the furniture would be estimated at two-thirds of its actual cost, either to benefit her, or to lighten the succession duty, and also because a valuer can be held responsible for the declared value—the valuation thus made stood at six hundred thousand francs. Your wife had a right to half for her share. Everything was sold and bought in by her; she got something out of it all, and the hospitals got their seventy-five thousand francs. Then, as the remainder went to the State, since you had made no mention of your wife in your will, the Emperor restored to your widow by decree the residue which would have reverted to the Exchequer. So, now, what can you claim? Three hundred thousand francs, no more, and minus the costs."

"And you call that justice!" said the Colonel, in dismay.

"Why, certainly——"

"A pretty kind of justice!"

"So it is, my dear Colonel. You see, that what you thought so easy is not so. Madame Ferraud might even choose to keep the sum given to her by the Emperor."

"But she was not a widow. The decree is utterly void——"

"I agree with you. But every case can get a hearing. Listen to me. I think that under these circumstances a compromise would be both for her and for you the best solution of the question. You will gain by it a more considerable sum than you can prove a right to."

"That would be to sell my wife!"

"With twenty-four thousand francs a year you could find a woman who, in the position in which you are, would suit you better than your own wife, and make you happier. I propose going this very day to see the Comtesse Ferraud and sounding the ground; but I would not take such a step without giving you due notice."

"Let us go together."

"What, just as you are?" said the lawyer. "No, my dear Colonel, no. You might lose your case on the spot."

"Can I possibly gain it?"

"On every count," replied Derville. "But, my dear Colonel Chabert, you overlook one thing. I am not rich; the price of my connection is not wholly paid up. If the bench should allow you a maintenance, that is to say, a sum advanced on your prospects, they will not do so till you have proved that you are Comte Chabert, grand officer of the Legion of Honor."

"To be sure, I am a grand officer of the Legion of Honor; I had forgotten that," said he simply.

"Well, until then," Derville went on, "will you not have to engage pleaders, to have documents copied, to keep the underlings of the law going, and to support yourself? The expenses of the preliminary inquiries will, at a rough guess, amount to ten or twelve thousand francs. I have not so much

to lend you—I am crushed as it is by the enormous interest I have to pay on the money I borrowed to buy my business; and you?—Where can you find it?"

Large tears gathered in the poor veteran's faded eyes, and rolled down his withered cheeks. This outlook of difficulties discouraged him. The social and the legal world weighed on his breast like a nightmare.

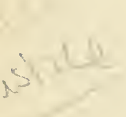
"I will go to the foot of the Vendôme column!" he cried. "I will call out: 'I am Colonel Chabert who rode through the Russian square at Eylau!'—The statue—he—he will know me."

"And you will find yourself in Charenton."

At this terrible name the soldier's transports collapsed.

"And will there be no hope for me at the Ministry of War?"

"The war office!" said Derville. "Well, go there; but take a formal legal opinion with you, nullifying the certificate of your death. The government offices would be only too glad if they could annihilate the men of the Empire."



The Colonel stood for a while, speechless, motionless, his eyes fixed, but seeing nothing, sunk in bottomless despair. Military justice is ready and swift; it decides with Turk-like finality, and almost always rightly. This was the only justice known to Chabert. As he saw the labyrinth of difficulties into which he must plunge, and how much money would be required for the journey, the poor old soldier was mortally hit in that power peculiar to man, and called the Will. He thought it would be impossible to live as party to a lawsuit; it seemed a thousand times simpler to remain poor and a beggar, or to enlist as a trooper if any regiment would pass him.

His physical and mental sufferings had already impaired his bodily health in some of the most important organs. He was on the verge of one of those maladies for which medicine has no name, and of which the seat is in some degree variable, like the nervous system itself, the part most frequently attacked of the whole human machine—a malady

which may be designated as the heart-sickness of the unfortunate. However serious this invisible but real disorder might already be, it could still be cured by a happy issue. But a fresh obstacle, an unexpected incident, would be enough to wreck this vigorous constitution, to break the weakened springs, and produce the hesitancy, the aimless, unfinished movements, which physiologists know well in men undermined by grief.

Derville, detecting in his client the symptoms of extreme dejection, said to him:

"Take courage; the end of the business cannot fail to be in your favor. Only, consider whether you can give me your whole confidence and blindly accept the result I may think best for your interests."

"Do what you will," said Chabert.

"Yes, but you surrender yourself to me like a man marching to his death."

"Must I not be left to live without a position, without a name? Is that endurable?"

"That is not my view of it," said the lawyer. "We will try a friendly suit, to annul both your death certificate and your marriage, so as to put you in possession of your rights. You may even, by Comte Ferraud's intervention, have your name replaced on the army list as general, and no doubt you will get a pension."

"Well, proceed then," said Chabert. "I put myself entirely in your hands."

"I will send you a power of attorney to sign," said Derville. "Good-bye. Keep up your courage. If you want money, rely on me."

Chabert warmly wrung the lawyer's hand, and remained standing with his back against the wall, not having the energy to follow him excepting with his eyes. Like all men who know but little of legal matters, he was frightened by this unforeseen struggle.

During their interview, several times, the figure of a man posted in the street had come forward from behind one of

the gate-pillars, watching for Derville to depart, and he now accosted the lawyer. He was an old man, wearing a blue waistcoat and a white-pleated kilt, like a brewer's; on his head was an otter-skin cap. His face was tanned, hollow-cheeked, and wrinkled, but ruddy on the cheek-bones by hard work and exposure to the open air.

"Asking your pardon, sir," said he, taking Derville by the arm, "if I take the liberty of speaking to you. But I fancied, from the look of you, that you were a friend of our General's."

"And what then?" replied Derville. "What concern have you with him?—But who are you?" said the cautious lawyer.

"I am Louis Vergniaud," he replied at once. "I have two words to say to you."

"So you are the man who has lodged Comte Chabert as I have found him?"

"Asking your pardon, sir, he has the best room. I would have given him mine if I had had but one; I could have slept in the stable. A man who has suffered as he has, who teaches my kids to read, a general, an Egyptian, the first lieutenant I ever served under—What do you think?—Of us all, he is best served. I shared what I had with him. Unfortunately, it is not much to boast of—bread, milk, eggs. Well, well; it's neighbors' fare, sir. And he is heartily welcome.—But he has hurt our feelings."

"He?"

"Yes, sir, hurt our feelings. To be plain with you, I have taken a larger business than I can manage, and he saw it. Well, it worried him; he must needs mind the horse! I says to him, 'Really, General——' 'Bah!' says he, 'I am not going to eat my head off doing nothing. I learned to rub a horse down many a year ago.'—I had some bills out for the purchase money of my dairy—a fellow named Grados—Do you know him, sir?"

"But, my good man, I have not time to listen to your story. Only tell me how the Colonel offended you."

"He hurt our feelings, sir, as sure as my name is Louis Vergniaud, and my wife cried about it. He heard from our neighbors that we had not a sou to begin to meet the bills with. The old soldier, as he is, he saved up all you gave him, he watched for the bill to come in, and he paid it. Such a trick! While my wife and me, we knew he had no tobacco, poor old boy, and went without.—Oh! now—yes, he has his cigar every morning! I would sell my soul for it—No, we are hurt. Well, so I wanted to ask you—for he said you were a good sort—to lend us a hundred crowns on the stock, so that we may get him some clothes, and furnish his room. He thought he was getting us out of debt, you see? Well, it's just the other way; the old man is running us into debt—and hurt our feelings!—He ought not to have stolen a march on us like that. And we his friends, too!—On my word as an honest man, as sure as my name is Louis Vergniaud, I would sooner sell up and enlist than fail to pay you back your money——"

Derville looked at the dairyman, and stepped back a few paces to glance at the house, the yard, the manure-pool, the cowhouse, the rabbits, the children.

"On my honor, I believe it is characteristic of virtue to have nothing to do with riches!" thought he.

"All right, you shall have your hundred crowns, and more. But I shall not give them to you; the Colonel will be rich enough to help, and I will not deprive him of the pleasure."

"And will that be soon?"

"Why, yes."

"Ah, dear God! how glad my wife will be!" and the cow-keeper's tanned face seemed to expand.

"Now," said Derville to himself, as he got into his cab again, "let us call on our opponent. We must not show our hand, but try to see hers, and win the game at one stroke. She must be frightened. She is a woman. Now, what frightens women most? A woman is afraid of nothing but . . ."

And he set to work to study the Countess' position, falling

into one of those brown studies to which great politicians give themselves up when concocting their own plans and trying to guess the secrets of a hostile Cabinet. Are not attorneys, in a way, statesmen in charge of private affairs?

But a brief survey of the situation in which the Comte Ferraud and his wife now found themselves is necessary for a comprehension of the lawyer's cleverness.

Monsieur le Comte Ferraud was the only son of a former Councillor in the old *Parlement* of Paris, who had emigrated during the Reign of Terror, and so, though he saved his head, lost his fortune. He came back under the Consulate, and remained persistently faithful to the cause of Louis XVIII., in whose circle his father had moved before the Revolution. He thus was one of the party in the Faubourg Saint-Germain which nobly stood out against Napoleon's blandishments. The reputation for capacity gained by young Count—then simply called Monsieur Ferraud—made him the object of the Emperor's advances, for he was often as well pleased at his conquests among the aristocracy as at gaining a battle. The Count was promised the restitution of his title, of such of his estates as had not been sold, and he was shown in perspective a place in the ministry or as senator.

The Emperor fell.

At the time of Comte Chabert's death, M. Ferraud was a young man of six-and-twenty, without fortune, of pleasing appearance, who had had his successes, and whom the Faubourg Saint-Germain had adopted as doing it credit; but Madame la Comtesse Chabert had managed to turn her share of her husband's fortune to such good account that, after eighteen months of widowhood, she had about forty thousand francs a year. Her marriage to the young Count was not regarded as news in the circles of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Napoleon, approving of this union, which carried out his idea of fusion, restored to Madame Chabert the money falling to the Exchequer under her husband's will; but Napoleon's hopes were again disappointed. Madame Ferraud was not only in love with her lover; she had also been fas-

cinated by the notion of getting into the haughty society which, in spite of its humiliation, was still predominant at the Imperial Court. By this marriage all her vanities were as much gratified as her passions. She was to become a real fine lady. When the Faubourg Saint-Germain understood that the young Count's marriage did not mean desertion, its drawing-rooms were thrown open to his wife.

Then came the Restoration. The Count's political advancement was not rapid. He understood the exigencies of the situation in which Louis XVIII. found himself; he was one of the inner circle who waited till the "Gulf of Revolution should be closed"—for this phrase of the King's, at which the Liberals laughed so heartily, had a political sense. The order quoted in the long lawyer's preamble at the beginning of this story had, however, put him in possession of two tracts of forest, and of an estate which had considerably increased in value during its sequestration. At the present moment, though Comte Ferraud was a Councillor of State, and a Director-General, he regarded his position as merely the first step of his political career.

Wholly occupied as he was by the anxieties of consuming ambition, he had attached to himself, as secretary, a ruined attorney named Delbecq, a more than clever man, versed in all the resources of the law, to whom he left the conduct of his private affairs. This shrewd practitioner had so well understood his position with the Count as to be honest in his own interest. He hoped to get some place by his master's influence, and he made the Count's fortune his first care. His conduct so effectually gave the lie to his former life, that he was regarded as a slandered man. The Countess, with the tact and shrewdness of which most women have a share more or less, understood the man's motives, watched him quietly, and managed him so well, that she had made good use of him for the augmentation of her private fortune. She had contrived to make Delbecq believe that she ruled her husband, and had promised to get him appointed President of an inferior Court in some important provincial town, if he devoted himself entirely to her interests.

The promise of a place, not dependent on changes of ministry, which would allow of his marrying advantageously, and rising subsequently to a high political position, by being chosen Député, made Delbecq the Countess' abject slave. He had never allowed her to miss one of those favorable chances which the fluctuations of the Bourse and the increased value of property afforded to clever financiers in Paris during the first three years after the Restoration. He had trebled his protectress' capital, and all the more easily because the Countess had no scruples as to the means which might make her an enormous fortune as quickly as possible. The emoluments derived by the Count from the places he held she spent on the housekeeping, so as to reinvest her dividends; and Delbecq lent himself to these calculations of avarice without trying to account for her motives. People of that sort never trouble themselves about any secrets of which the discovery is not necessary to their own interests. And, indeed, he naturally found the reason in the thirst for money, which taints almost every Parisian woman; and as a fine fortune was needed to support the pretensions of Comte Ferraud, the secretary sometimes fancied that he saw in the Countess' greed a consequence of her devotion to a husband with whom she still was in love. The Countess buried the secrets of her conduct at the bottom of her heart. There lay the secrets of life and death to her, there lay the turning-point of this history.

At the beginning of the year 1818 the Restoration was settled on an apparently immovable foundation; its doctrines of government, as understood by lofty minds, seemed calculated to bring to France an era of renewed prosperity, and Parisian society changed its aspect. Madame la Comtesse Ferraud found that by chance she had achieved for love a marriage that had brought her fortune and gratified ambition. Still young and handsome, Madame Ferraud played the part of a woman of fashion, and lived in the atmosphere of the Court. Rich herself, with a rich husband who was cried up as one of the ablest men of the royalist party, and, as a friend of the King, certain to be made Min-

ister, she belonged to the aristocracy, and shared its magnificence. In the midst of this triumph she was attacked by a moral canker. There are feelings which women guess in spite of the care men take to bury them. On the first return of the King, Comte Ferraud had begun to regret his marriage. Colonel Chabert's widow had not been the means of allying him to anybody; he was alone and unsupported in steering his way in a course full of shoals and beset by enemies. Also, perhaps, when he came to judge his wife coolly, he may have discerned in her certain vices of education which made her unfit to second him in his schemes.

A speech he made, *à propos* of Talleyrand's marriage, enlightened the Countess, to whom it proved that if he had still been a free man she would never have been Madame Ferraud. What woman could forgive this repentance? Does it not include the germs of every insult, every crime, every form of repudiation? But what a wound must it have left in the Countess' heart, supposing that she lived in the dread of her first husband's return? She had known that he still lived, and she had ignored him. Then during the time when she had heard no more of him, she had chosen to believe that he had fallen at Waterloo with the Imperial Eagle, at the same time as Boutin. She resolved, nevertheless, to bind the Count to her by the strongest of all ties, by a chain of gold, and vowed to be so rich that her fortune might make her second marriage indissoluble, if by chance Colonel Chabert should ever reappear. And he had reappeared; and she could not explain to herself why the struggle she dreaded had not already begun. Suffering, sickness, had perhaps delivered her from that man. Perhaps he was half mad, and Charenton might yet do her justice. She had not chosen to take either Delbecq or the police into her confidence, for fear of putting herself in their power, or of hastening the catastrophe. There are in Paris many women who, like the Countess Ferraud, live with an unknown moral monster, or on the brink of an abyss; a callus forms over the spot that tortures them, and they can still laugh and enjoy themselves.

"There is something very strange in Comte Ferraud's position," said Derville to himself, on emerging from his long reverie, as his cab stopped at the door of the Hôtel Ferraud in the Rue de Varennes. "How is it that he, so rich as he is, and such a favorite with the King, is not yet a peer of France? It may, to be sure, be true that the King, as Mme. de Grandlieu was telling me, desires to keep up the value of the *pairie* by not bestowing it right and left. And, after all, the son of a Councillor of the *Parlement* is not a Crillon nor a Rohan. A Comte Ferraud can only get into the Upper Chamber surreptitiously. But if his marriage were annulled, could he not get the dignity of some old peer who has only daughters transferred to himself, to the King's great satisfaction? At any rate this will be a good bogey to put forward and frighten the Countess," thought he as he went up the steps.

Derville had without knowing it laid his finger on the hidden wound, put his hand on the canker that consumed Madame Ferraud.

She received him in a pretty winter dining-room, where she was at breakfast, while playing with a monkey tethered by a chain to a little pole with climbing bars of iron. The Countess was in an elegant wrapper; the curls of her hair, carelessly pinned up, escaped from a cap, giving her an arch look. She was fresh and smiling. Silver, gilding, and mother-of-pearl shone on the table, and all about the room were rare plants growing in magnificent china jars. As he saw Colonel Chabert's wife, rich with his spoil, in the lap of luxury and the height of fashion, while he, poor wretch, was living with a poor dairyman among the beasts, the lawyer said to himself:

"The moral of all this is that a pretty woman will never acknowledge as her husband, nor even as a lover, a man in an old box-coat, a tow wig, and boots with holes in them."

A mischievous and bitter smile expressed the feelings, half philosophical and half satirical, which such a man was certain to experience—a man well situated to know the truth

of things in spite of the lies behind which most families in Paris hide their mode of life.

"Good-morning, Monsieur Derville," said she, giving the monkey some coffee to drink.

"Madame," said he, a little sharply, for the light tone in which she spoke jarred on him, "I have come to speak with you on a very serious matter."

"I am so *grieved,* M. le Comte is away——"

"I, madame, am delighted. It would be grievous if he could be present at our interview. Besides, I am informed through M. Delbecq that you like to manage your own business without troubling the Count."

"Then I will send for Delbecq," said she.

"He would be of no use to you, clever as he is," replied Derville. "Listen to me, madame; one word will be enough to make you grave. Colonel Chabert is alive!"

"Is it by telling me such nonsense as that that you think you can make me grave?" said she with a shout of laughter. But she was suddenly quelled by the singular penetration of the fixed gaze which Derville turned on her, seeming to read to the bottom of her soul.

"Madame," he said, with cold and piercing solemnity, "you know not the extent of the danger which threatens you. I need say nothing of the indisputable authenticity of the evidence nor of the fulness of proof which testifies to the identity of Comte Chabert. I am not, as you know, the man to take up a bad cause. If you resist our proceedings to show that the certificate of death was false, you will lose that first case, and that matter once settled, we shall gain every point."

"What, then, do you wish to discuss with me?"

"Neither the Colonel nor yourself. Nor need I allude to the briefs which clever advocates may draw up when armed with the curious facts of this case, or the advantage they may derive from the letters you received from your first husband before your marriage to your second."

"It is false," she cried, with the violence of a spoilt woman. "I never had a letter from Comte Chabert; and if some one

is pretending to be the Colonel, it is some swindler, some returned convict, like Coignard perhaps. It makes me shudder only to think of it. Can the Colonel rise from the dead, monsieur? Bonaparte sent an aide-de-camp to inquire for me on his death, and to this day I draw the pension of three thousand francs granted to his widow by the Government. I have been perfectly in the right to turn away all the Chaberts who have ever come, as I shall all who may come."

"Happily we are alone, madame. We can tell lies at our ease," said he coolly, and finding it amusing to lash up the Countess' rage so as to lead her to betray herself, by tactics familiar to lawyers, who are accustomed to keep cool when their opponents or their clients are in a passion. "Well, then, we must fight it out," thought he, instantly hitting on a plan to entrap her and show her her weakness.

"The proof that you received the first letter, madame, is that it contained some securities——"

"Oh, as to securities—that it certainly did not."

"Then you received the letter," said Derville, smiling. "You are caught, madame, in the first snare laid for you by an attorney, and you fancy you could fight against Justice——"

The Countess colored, and then turned pale, hiding her face in her hands. Then she shook off her shame, and retorted with the natural impertinence of such women, "Since you are the so-called Chabert's attorney, be so good as to——"

"Madame," said Derville, "I am at this moment as much your lawyer as I am Colonel Chabert's. Do you suppose I want to lose so valuable a client as you are?—But you are not listening."

"Nay, speak on, monsieur," said she graciously.

"Your fortune came to you from M. le Comte Chabert, and you cast him off. Your fortune is immense, and you leave him to beg. An advocate can be very eloquent when a cause is eloquent in itself; there are here circumstances which might turn public opinion strongly against you."

"But, monsieur," said the Comtesse, provoked by the way in which Derville turned and laid her on the gridiron, "even if I grant that your M. Chabert is living, the law will uphold my second marriage on account of the children, and I shall get off with the restitution of two hundred and twenty-five thousand francs to M. Chabert."

"It is impossible to foresee what view the Bench may take of the question. If on one side we have a mother and children, on the other we have an old man crushed by sorrows, made old by your refusals to know him. Where is he to find a wife? Can the judges contravene the law? Your marriage with Colonel Chabert has priority on its side and every legal right. But if you appear under disgraceful colors, you might have an unlooked-for adversary. That, madame, is the danger against which I would warn you."

"And who is he?"

"Comte Ferraud."

"Monsieur Ferraud has too great an affection for me, too much respect for the mother of his children——"

"Do not talk of such absurd things," interrupted Derville, "to lawyers, who are accustomed to read hearts to the bottom. At this instant Monsieur Ferraud has not the slightest wish to annul your union, and I am quite sure that he adores you; but if some one were to tell him that his marriage is void, that his wife will be called before the bar of public opinion as a criminal——"

"He would defend me, monsieur."

"No, madame."

"What reason could he have for deserting me, monsieur?"

"That he would be free to marry the only daughter of a peer of France, whose title would be conferred on him by patent from the King."

The Countess turned pale.

"A hit!" said Derville to himself. "I have you on the hip; the poor Colonel's case is won."—"Besides, madame," he went on aloud, "he would feel all the less remorse because a man covered with glory—a General, Count, Grand Cross of

the Legion of Honor—is not such a bad alternative; and if that man insisted on his wife's returning to him——"

"Enough, enough, monsieur!" she exclaimed. "I will never have any lawyer but you. What is to be done?"

"Compromise!" said Derville.

"Does he still love me?" she said.

"Well, I do not think he can do otherwise."

The Countess raised her head at these words. A flash of hope shone in her eyes; she thought perhaps that she could speculate on her first husband's affection to gain her cause by some feminine cunning.

"I shall await your orders, madame, to know whether I am to report our proceedings to you, or if you will come to my office to agree to the terms of a compromise," said Derville, taking leave.

A week after Derville had paid these two visits, on a fine morning in June, the husband and wife, who had been separated by an almost supernatural chance, started from the opposite ends of Paris to meet in the office of the lawyer who was engaged by both. The supplies liberally advanced by Derville to Colonel Chabert had enabled him to dress as suited his position in life, and the dead man arrived in a very decent cab. He wore a wig suited to his face, was dressed in blue cloth with white linen, and wore under his waistcoat the broad red ribbon of the higher grade of the Legion of Honor. In resuming the habits of wealth he had recovered his soldierly style. He held himself up; his face, grave and mysterious-looking, reflected his happiness and all his hopes, and seemed to have acquired youth and *impasto,* to borrow a picturesque word from the painter's art. He was no more like the Chabert of the old box-coat than a cartwheel double sou is like a newly coined forty-franc piece. The passer-by, only to see him, would have recognized at once one of the noble wrecks of our old army, one of the heroic men on whom our national glory is reflected, as a splinter of ice on which the sun shines seems to reflect every beam. These veterans are at once a picture and a book.

When the Count jumped out of his carriage to go into Derville's office, he did it as lightly as a young man. Hardly had his cab moved off, when a smart brougham drove up, splendid with coats-of-arms. Madame la Comtesse Ferraud stepped out in a dress which, though simple, was cleverly designed to show how youthful her figure was. She wore a pretty drawn bonnet lined with pink, which framed her face to perfection, softening its outlines and making it look younger.

If the clients were rejuvenescent, the office was unaltered, and presented the same picture as that described at the beginning of this story. Simonnin was eating his breakfast, his shoulder leaning against the window, which was then open, and he was staring up at the blue sky in the opening of the courtyard enclosed by four gloomy houses.

"Ah, ha!" cried the little clerk, "who will bet an evening at the play that Colonel Chabert is a General, and wears a red ribbon?"

"The chief is a great magician," said Godeschal.

"Then there is no trick to play on him this time?" asked Desroches.

"His wife has taken that in hand, the Comtesse Ferraud," said Boucard.

"What next?" said Godeschal. "Is Comtesse Ferraud required to belong to two men?"

"Here she is," answered Simonnin.

At this moment the Colonel came in and asked for Derville.

"He is at home, sir," said Simonnin.

"So you are not deaf, you young rogue!" said Chabert, taking the gutter-jumper by the ear and twisting it, to the delight of the other clerks, who began to laugh, looking at the Colonel with the curious attention due to so singular a personage.

Comte Chabert was in Derville's private room at the moment when his wife came in by the door of the office.

"I say, Boucard, there is going to be a queer scene in the

chief's room! There is a woman who can spend her days alternately, the odd with Comte Ferraud, and the even with Comte Chabert."

"And in leap year," said Godeschal, "they must settle the *count* between them."

"Silence, gentlemen, you can be heard!" said Boucard severely. "I never was in an office where there was so much jesting as there is here over the clients."

Derville had made the Colonel retire to the bedroom when the Countess was admitted.

"Madame," he said, "not knowing whether it would be agreeable to you to meet M. le Comte Chabert, I have placed you apart. If, however, you should wish it——"

"It is an attention for which I am obliged to you."

"I have drawn up the memorandum of an agreement of which you and M. Chabert can discuss the conditions, here, and now. I will go alternately to him and to you, and explain your views respectively."

"Let me see, monsieur," said the Countess impatiently.

Derville read aloud:

"'Between the undersigned:

"'M. Hyacinthe Chabert, Count, Maréchal de Camp, and Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, living in Paris, Rue du Petit-Banquier, on the one part;

"'And Madame Rose Chapotel, wife of the aforesaid M. la Comte Chabert, *née*——'"

"Pass over the preliminaries," said she. "Come to the conditions."

"Madame," said the lawyer, "the preamble briefly sets forth the position in which you stand to each other. Then, by the first clause, you acknowledge, in the presence of three witnesses, of whom two shall be notaries, and one the dairyman with whom your husband has been lodging, to all of whom your secret is known, and who will be absolutely silent—you acknowledge, I say, that the individual designated in the documents subjoined to the deed, and whose identity is to be further proved by an act of recognition prepared by your

notary, Alexandre Crottat, is your first husband, Comte Chabert. By the second clause Comte Chabert, to secure your happiness, will undertake to assert his rights only under certain circumstances set forth in the deed.—And these," said Derville, in a parenthesis, "are none other than a failure to carry out the conditions of this secret agreement.—M. Chabert, on his part, agrees to accept judgment on a friendly suit, by which his certificate of death shall be annulled, and his marriage dissolved."

"That will not suit me in the least," said the Countess with surprise. "I will be a party to no suit; you know why."

"By the third clause," Derville went on, with imperturbable coolness, "you pledge yourself to secure to Hyacinthe Comte Chabert an income of twenty-four thousand francs on government stock held in his name, to revert to you at his death——"

"But it is much too dear!" exclaimed the Countess.

"Can you compromise the matter cheaper?"

"Possibly."

"But what do you want, madame?"

"I want—I will not have a lawsuit. I want——"

"You want him to remain dead?" said Derville, interrupting her hastily.

"Monsieur," said the Countess, "if twenty-four thousand francs a year are necessary, we will go to law——"

"Yes, we will go to law," said the Colonel in a deep voice, as he opened the door and stood before his wife, with one hand in his waistcoat and the other hanging by his side—an attitude to which the recollection of his adventure gave horrible significance.

"It is he," said the Countess to herself.

"Too dear!" the old soldier exclaimed. "I have given you near on a million, and you are cheapening my misfortunes. Very well; now I will have you—you and your fortune. Our goods are in common, our marriage is not dissolved——"

"But monsieur is not Colonel Chabert!" cried the Countess, in feigned amazement.

"Indeed!" said the old man, in a tone of intense irony. "Do you want proofs? I found you in the Palais Royal——"

The Countess turned pale. Seeing her grow white under her rouge, the old soldier paused, touched by the acute suffering he was inflicting on the woman he had once so ardently loved; but she shot such a venomous glance at him that he abruptly went on:

"You were with La——"

"Allow me, Monsieur Derville," said the Countess to the lawyer. "You must give me leave to retire. I did not come here to listen to such dreadful things."

She rose and went out. Derville rushed after her; but the Countess had taken wings, and seemed to have flown from the place.

On returning to his private room, he found the Colonel in a towering rage, striding up and down.

"In those times a man took his wife where he chose," said he. "But I was foolish, and chose badly; I trusted to appearances. She has no heart."

"Well, Colonel, was I not right to beg you not to come?—I am now positive of your identity; when you came in, the Countess gave a little start, of which the meaning was unequivocal. But you have lost your chances. Your wife knows that you are unrecognizable."

"I will kill her!"

"Madness! you will be caught and executed like any common wretch. Besides, you might miss! That would be unpardonable. A man must not miss his shot when he wants to kill his wife.—Let me set things straight; you are only a big child. Go now. Take care of yourself; she is capable of setting some trap for you and shutting you up in Charenton. I will notify her of our proceedings to protect you against a surprise."

The unhappy Colonel obeyed his young benefactor, and went away, stammering apologies. He slowly went down the dark staircase, lost in gloomy thoughts, and crushed perhaps by the blow just dealt him—the most cruel he could feel, the

thrust that could most deeply pierce his heart—when he heard the rustle of a woman's dress on the lowest landing, and his wife stood before him

"Come, monsieur," said she, taking his arm with a gesture like those familiar to him of old. Her action and the accent of her voice, which had recovered its graciousness, were enough to allay the Colonel's wrath, and he allowed himself to be led to the carriage.

"Well, get in!" said she, when the footman had let down the step.

And as if by magic, he found himself sitting by his wife in the brougham.

"Where to?" asked the servant.

"To Groslay," said she.

The horses started at once, and carried them all across Paris.

"Monsieur," said the Countess, in a tone of voice which betrayed one of those emotions which are rare in our lives, and which agitate every part of our being. At such moments the heart, fibres, nerves, countenance, soul, and body, everything, every pore even, feels a thrill. Life no longer seems to be within us; it flows out, springs forth, is communicated as if by contagion, transmitted by a look, a tone of voice, a gesture, impressing our will on others. The old soldier started on hearing this single word, this first, terrible "monsieur!" But still it was at once a reproach and a pardon, a hope and a despair, a question and an answer. This word included them all; none but an actress could have thrown so much eloquence, so many feelings into a single word. Truth is less complete in its utterance; it does not put everything on the outside; it allows us to see what is within. The Colonel was filled with remorse for his suspicions, his demands, and his anger; he looked down not to betray his agitation.

"Monsieur," repeated she, after an imperceptible pause, "I knew you at once."

"Rosine," said the old soldier, "those words contain the only balm that can help me to forget my misfortunes."

Two large tears rolled hot on to his wife's hands, which he pressed to show his paternal affection.

"Monsieur," she went on, "could you not have guessed what it cost me to appear before a stranger in a position so false as mine now is? If I have to blush for it, at least let it be in the privacy of my family. Ought not such a secret to remain buried in our hearts? You will forgive me, I hope, for my apparent indifference to the woes of a Chabert in whose existence I could not possibly believe. I received your letters," she hastily added, seeing in his face the objection it expressed, "but they did not reach me till thirteen months after the battle of Eylau. They were opened, dirty, the writing was unrecognizable; and after obtaining Napoleon's signature to my second marriage contract, I could not help believing that some clever swindler wanted to make a fool of me. Therefore, to avoid disturbing Monsieur Ferraud's peace of mind, and disturbing family ties, I was obliged to take precautions against a pretended Chabert. Was I not right, I ask you?"

"Yes, you were right. It was I who was the idiot, the owl, the dolt, not to have calculated better what the consequences of such a position might be.—But where are we going?" he asked, seeing that they had reached the barrier of La Chapelle.

"To my country house near Groslay, in the valley of Montmorency. There, monsieur, we will consider the steps to be taken. I know my duties. Though I am yours by right, I am no longer yours in fact. Can you wish that we should become the talk of Paris? We need not inform the public of a situation, which for me has its ridiculous side, and let us preserve our dignity. You still love me," she said, with a sad, sweet gaze at the Colonel, "but have not I been authorized to form other ties? In so strange a position, a secret voice bids me trust to your kindness, which is so well known to me. Can I be wrong in taking you as the sole arbiter of my fate? Be at once judge and party to the suit. I trust in your noble character; you will be generous enough to for-

give me for the consequences of faults committed in innocence. I may then confess to you: I love M. Ferraud. I believed that I had a right to love him. I do not blush to make this confession to you; even if it offends you, it does not disgrace us. I cannot conceal the facts. When fate made me a widow, I was not a mother."

The Colonel with a wave of his hand bid his wife be silent, and for a mile and a half they sat without speaking a single word. Chabert could fancy he saw the two little ones before him.

"Rosine."

"Monsieur?"

"The dead are very wrong to come to life again."

"Oh, monsieur, no, no! Do not think me ungrateful. Only, you find me a lover, a mother, while you left me merely a wife. Though it is no longer in my power to love, I know how much I owe you, and I can still offer you all the affection of a daughter."

"Rosine," said the old man in a softened tone, "I no longer feel any resentment against you. We will forget everything," he added, with one of those smiles which always reflect a noble soul; "I have not so little delicacy as to demand the mockery of love from a wife who no longer loves me."

The Countess gave him a flashing look full of such deep gratitude that poor Chabert would have been glad to sink again into his grave at Eylau. Some men have a soul strong enough for such self-devotion, of which the whole reward consists in the assurance that they have made the person they love happy.

"My dear friend, we will talk all this over later when our hearts have rested," said the Countess.

The conversation turned to other subjects, for it was impossible to dwell very long on this one. Though the couple came back again and again to their singular position, either by some allusion or of serious purpose, they had a delightful drive, recalling the events of their former life together and the times of the Empire. The Countess knew how to lend

peculiar charm to her reminiscences, and gave the conversation the tinge of melancholy that was needed to keep it serious. She revived his love without awakening his desires, and allowed her first husband to discern the mental wealth she had acquired while trying to accustom him to moderate his pleasure to that which a father may feel in the society of a favorite daughter.

The Colonel had known the Countess of the Empire; he found her a Countess of the Restoration.

At last, by a cross-road, they arrived at the entrance to a large park lying in the little valley which divides the heights of Margency from the pretty village of Groslay. The Countess had there a delightful house, where the Colonel on arriving found everything in readiness for his stay there, as well as for his wife's. Misfortune is a kind of talisman whose virtue consists in its power to confirm our original nature; in some men it increases their distrust and malignancy, just as it improves the goodness of those who have a kind heart.

Sorrow had made the Colonel even more helpful and good than he had always been, and he could understand some secrets of womanly distress which are unrevealed to most men. Nevertheless, in spite of his loyal trustfulness, he could not help saying to his wife:

"Then you felt quite sure you would bring me here?"

"Yes," replied she, "if I found Colonel Chabert in Derville's client."

The appearance of truth she contrived to give to this answer dissipated the slight suspicions which the Colonel was ashamed to have felt. For three days the Countess was quite charming to her first husband. By tender attentions and unfailing sweetness she seemed anxious to wipe out the memory of the sufferings he had endured, and to earn forgiveness for the woes which, as she confessed, she had innocently caused him. She delighted in displaying for him the charms she knew he took pleasure in, while at the same time she assumed a kind of melancholy; for men are more especially accessible

to certain ways, certain graces of the heart or of the mind which they cannot resist. She aimed at interesting him in her position, and appealing to his feelings so far as to take possession of his mind and control him despotically.

Ready for anything to attain her ends, she did not yet know what she was to do with this man; but at any rate she meant to annihilate him socially. On the evening of the third day she felt that in spite of her efforts she could not conceal her uneasiness as to the results of her manœuvres. To give herself a minute's reprieve she went up to her room, sat down before her writing-table, and laid aside the mask of composure which she wore in Chabert's presence, like an actress who, returning to her dressing-room after a fatiguing fifth act, drops half dead, leaving with the audience an image of herself which she no longer resembles. She proceeded to finish a letter she had begun to Delbecq, whom she desired to go in her name and demand of Derville the deeds relating to Colonel Chabert, to copy them, and to come to her at once to Groslay. She had hardly finished when she heard the Colonel's step in the passage; uneasy at her absence, he had come to look for her.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "I wish I were dead! My position is intolerable . . ."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked the good man.

"Nothing, nothing!" she replied.

She rose, left the Colonel, and went down to speak privately to her maid, whom she sent off to Paris, impressing on her that she was herself to deliver to Delbecq the letter just written, and to bring it back to the writer as soon as he had read it. Then the Countess went out to sit on a bench sufficiently in sight for the Colonel to join her as soon as he might choose. The Colonel, who was looking for her, hastened up and sat down by her.

"Rosine," said he, "what is the matter with you?"

She did not answer.

It was one of those glorious, calm evenings in the month of June, whose secret harmonies infuse such sweetness into

the sunset. The air was clear, the stillness perfect, so that far away in the park they could hear the voices of some children, which added a kind of melody to the sublimity of the scene.

"You do not answer me?" the Colonel said to his wife.

"My husband——" said the Countess, who broke off, started a little, and with a blush stopped to ask him, "What am I to say when I speak of M. Ferraud?"

"Call him your husband, my poor child," replied the Colonel, in a kind voice. "Is he not the father of your children?"

"Well, then," she said, "if he should ask what I came here for, if he finds that I came here, alone, with a stranger, what am I to say to him? Listen, monsieur," she went on, assuming a dignified attitude, "decide my fate, I am resigned to anything——"

"My dear," said the Colonel, taking possession of his wife's hands, "I have made up my mind to sacrifice myself entirely for your happiness——"

"That is impossible!" she exclaimed, with a sudden spasmodic movement. "Remember that you would have to renounce your identity, and in an authenticated form."

"What?" said the Colonel. "Is not my word enough for you?"

The word "authenticated" fell on the old man's heart, and roused involuntary distrust. He looked at his wife in a way that made her color, she cast down her eyes, and he feared that he might find himself compelled to despise her. The Countess was afraid lest she had scared the shy modesty, the stern honesty, of a man whose generous temper and primitive virtues were known to her. Though these feelings had brought the clouds to their brow, they immediately recovered their harmony. This was the way of it. A child's cry was heard in the distance.

"Jules, leave your sister in peace," the Countess called out.

"What, are your children here?" said Chabert.

"Yes, but I told them not to trouble you."

The old soldier understood the delicacy, the womanly tact of so gracious a precaution, and took the Countess' hand to kiss it.

"But let them come," said he.

The little girl ran up to complain of her brother.

"Mamma!"

"Mamma!"

"It was Jules——"

"It was her——"

Their little hands were held out to their mother, and the two childish voices mingled; it was an unexpected and charming picture.

"Poor little things!" cried the Countess, no longer restraining her tears, "I shall have to leave them. To whom will the law assign them? A mother's heart cannot be divided; I want them, I want them."

"Are you making mamma cry?" said Jules, looking fiercely at the Colonel.

"Silence, Jules!" said the mother in a decided tone.

The two children stood speechless, examining their mother and the stranger with a curiosity which it is impossible to express in words.

"Oh yes!" she cried. "If I am separated from the Count, only leave me my children, and I will submit to anything . . ."

This was the decisive speech which gained all that she had hoped from it.

"Yes," exclaimed the Colonel, as if he were ending a sentence already begun in his mind, "I must return underground again. I had told myself so already."

"Can I accept such a sacrifice?" replied his wife. "If some men have died to save a mistress' honor, they gave their life but once. But in this case you would be giving your life every day. No, no. It is impossible. If it were only your life, it would be nothing; but to sign a declaration that you are not Colonel Chabert, to acknowledge yourself an impostor, to sacrifice your honor, and live a lie every hour of

the day! Human devotion cannot go so far. Only think!—No. But for my poor children I would have fled with you by this time to the other end of the world."

"But," said Chabert, "cannot I live here in your little lodge as one of your relations? I am as worn out as a cracked cannon; I want nothing but a little tobacco and the *Constitutionnel*."

The Countess melted into tears. There was a contest of generosity between the Comtesse Ferraud and Colonel Chabert, and the soldier came out victorious. One evening, seeing this mother with her children, the soldier was bewitched by the touching grace of a family picture in the country, in the shade and the silence; he made a resolution to remain dead, and, frightened no longer at the authentication of a deed, he asked what he was to do to secure beyond all risk the happiness of this family.

"Do exactly as you like," said the Countess. "I declare to you that I will have nothing to do with this affair. I ought not."

Delbecq had arrived some days before, and in obedience to the Countess' verbal instructions, the intendant had succeeded in gaining the old soldier's confidence. So on the following morning Colonel Chabert went with the erewhile attorney to Saint-Leu-Taverny, where Delbecq had caused the notary to draw up an affidavit in such terms that, after hearing it read, the Colonel started up and walked out of the office.

"Turf and thunder! What a fool you must think me! Why, I should make myself out a swindler!" he exclaimed.

"Indeed, monsieur," said Delbecq, "I should advise you not to sign in haste. In your place I would get at least thirty thousand francs a year out of the bargain. Madame would pay them."

After annihilating this scoundrel *emeritus* by the lightning look of an honest man insulted, the Colonel rushed off, carried away by a thousand contrary emotions. He was suspicious, indignant, and calm again by turns.

Finally he made his way back into the park of Groslay

by a gap in a fence, and slowly walked on to sit down and rest, and meditate at his ease, in a little room under a gazebo, from which the road to Saint-Leu could be seen. The path being strewn with the yellowish sand which is used instead of river-gravel, the Countess, who was sitting in the upper room of this little summer-house, did not hear the Colonel's approach, for she was too much preoccupied with the success of her business to pay the smallest attention to the slight noise made by her husband. Nor did the old man notice that his wife was in the room over him.

"Well, Monsieur Delbecq, has he signed?" the Countess asked her secretary, whom she saw alone on the road beyond the hedge of a haha.

"No, madame. I do not even know what has become of our man. The old horse reared."

"Then we shall be obliged to put him into Charenton," said she, "since we have got him."

The Colonel, who recovered the elasticity of youth to leap the haha, in the twinkling of an eye was standing in front of Delbecq, on whom he bestowed the two finest slaps that ever a scoundrel's cheeks received.

"And you may add that old horses can kick!" said he.

His rage spent, the Colonel no longer felt vigorous enough to leap the ditch. He had seen the truth in all its nakedness. The Countess' speech and Delbecq's reply had revealed the conspiracy of which he was to be the victim. The care taken of him was but a bait to entrap him in a snare. That speech was like a drop of subtle poison, bringing on in the old soldier a return of all his sufferings, physical and moral. He came back to the summer-house through the park gate, walking slowly like a broken man.

Then for him there was to be neither peace nor truce. From this moment he must begin the odious warfare with this woman of which Derville had spoken, enter on a life of litigation, feed on gall, drink every morning of the cup of bitterness. And then—fearful thought!—where was he to find the money needful to pay the cost of the first proceedings?

He felt such disgust of life, that if there had been any water at hand he would have thrown himself into it; that if he had had a pistol, he would have blown out his brains. Then he relapsed into the indecision of mind which, since his conversation with Derville at the dairyman's, had changed his character.

At last, having reached the kiosque, he went up to the gazebo, where little rose-windows afforded a view over each lovely landscape of the valley, and where he found his wife seated on a chair. The Countess was gazing at the distance, and preserved a calm countenance, showing that impenetrable face which women can assume when resolved to do their worst. She wiped her eyes as if she had been weeping, and played absently with the pink ribbons of her sash. Nevertheless, in spite of her apparent assurance, she could not help shuddering slightly when she saw before her her venerable benefactor, standing with folded arms, his face pale, his brow stern.

"Madame," he said, after gazing at her fixedly for a moment and compelling her to blush, "Madame, I do not curse you—I scorn you. I can now thank the chance that has divided us. I do not feel even a desire for revenge; I no longer love you. I want nothing from you. Live in peace on the strength of my word; it is worth more than the scrawl of all the notaries in Paris. I will never assert my claim to the name I perhaps have made illustrious. I am henceforth but a poor devil named Hyacinthe, who asks no more than his share of the sunshine.—Farewell!"

The Countess threw herself at his feet; she would have detained him by taking his hands, but he pushed her away with disgust, saying:

"Do not touch me!"

The Countess' expression when she heard her husband's retreating steps is quite indescribable. Then, with the deep perspicacity given only by utter villainy, or by fierce worldly selfishness, she knew that she might live in peace on the word and the contempt of this loyal veteran.

Chabert, in fact, disappeared. The dairyman failed in business, and became a hackney-cab driver. The Colonel, perhaps took up some similar industry for a time. Perhaps, like a stone flung into a chasm, he went falling from ledge to ledge, to be lost in the mire of rags that seethes through the streets of Paris.

Six months after this event, Derville, hearing no more of Colonel Chabert or the Comtesse Ferraud, supposed that they had no doubt come to a compromise, which the Countess, out of revenge, had had arranged by some other lawyer. So one morning he added up the sums he had advanced to the said Chabert with the costs, and begged the Comtesse Ferraud to claim from M. le Comte Chabert the amount of the bill, assuming that she would know where to find her first husband.

The very next day Comte Ferraud's man of business, lately appointed President of the County Court in a town of some importance, wrote this distressing note to Derville:

"MONSIEUR,—

"Madame la Comtesse Ferraud desires me to inform you that your client took complete advantage of your confidence, and that the individual calling himself Comte Chabert has acknowledged that he came forward under false pretences.

"Yours, etc., DELBECQ."

"One comes across people who are, on my honor, too stupid by half," cried Derville. "They don't deserve to be Christians! Be humane, generous, philanthropical, and a lawyer, and you are bound to be cheated! There is a piece of business that will cost me two thousand-franc notes!"

Some time after receiving this letter, Derville went to the Palais de Justice in search of a pleader to whom he wished to speak, and who was employed in the Police Court. As chance would have it, Derville went into Court Number 6 at the moment when the Presiding Magistrate was sentencing one Hyacinthe to two months' imprisonment as a vagabond,

and subsequently to be taken to the Mendicity House of Detention, a sentence which, by magistrates' law, is equivalent to perpetual imprisonment. On hearing the name of Hyacinthe, Derville looked at the delinquent, sitting between two *gendarmes* on the bench for the accused, and recognized in the condemned man his false Colonel Chabert.

The old soldier was placid, motionless, almost absent-minded. In spite of his rags, in spite of the misery stamped on his countenance, it gave evidence of noble pride. His eye had a stoical expression which no magistrate ought to have misunderstood; but as soon as a man has fallen into the hands of justice, he is no more than a moral entity, a matter of law or of fact, just as to statists he has become a zero.

When the veteran was taken back to the lock-up, to be removed later with the batch of vagabonds at that moment at the bar, Derville availed himself of the privilege accorded to lawyers of going wherever they please in the Courts, and followed him to the lock-up, where he stood scrutinizing him for some minutes, as well as the curious crew of beggars among whom he found himself. The passage to the lock-up at that moment afforded one of those spectacles which, unfortunately, neither legislators, nor philanthropists, nor painters, nor writers come to study. Like all the laboratories of the law, this ante-room is a dark and malodorous place; along the walls runs a wooden seat, blackened by the constant presence there of the wretches who come to this meeting-place of every form of social squalor, where not one of them is missing.

A poet might say that the day was ashamed to light up this dreadful sewer through which so much misery flows! There is not a spot on that plank where some crime has not sat, in embryo or matured; not a corner where a man has never stood who, driven to despair by the blight which justice has set upon him after his first fault, has not there begun a career, at the end of which looms the guillotine or the pistol-snap of the suicide. All who fall on the pavement of

Paris rebound against these yellow-gray walls, on which a philanthropist who was not a speculator might read a justification of the numerous suicides complained of by hypocritical writers who are incapable of taking a step to prevent them—for that justification is written in that ante-room, like a preface to the dramas of the Morgue, or to those enacted on the Place de la Grève.

At this moment Colonel Chabert was sitting among these men—men with coarse faces, clothed in the horrible livery of misery, and silent at intervals, or talking in a low tone, for three gendarmes on duty paced to and fro, their sabres clattering on the floor.

"Do you recognize me?" said Derville to the old man, standing in front of him.

"Yes, sir," said Chabert, rising.

"If you are an honest man," Derville went on in an undertone, "how could you remain in my debt?"

The old soldier blushed as a young girl might when accused by her mother of a clandestine love affair.

"What! Madame Ferraud has not paid you?" cried he in a loud voice.

"Paid me?" said Derville. "She wrote to me that you were a swindler."

The Colonel cast up his eyes in a sublime impulse of horror and imprecation, as if to call heaven to witness to this fresh subterfuge.

"Monsieur," said he, in a voice that was calm by sheer huskiness, "get the gendarmes to allow me to go into the lock-up, and I will sign an order which will certainly be honored."

At a word from Derville to the sergeant he was allowed to take his client into the room, where Hyacinthe wrote a few lines, and addressed them to the Comtesse Ferraud.

"Send her that," said the soldier, "and you will be paid your costs and the money you advanced. Believe me, monsieur, if I have not shown you the gratitude I owe you for your kind offices, it is not the less there," and he laid his

hand on his heart. "Yes, it is there, deep and sincere. But what can the unfortunate do? They live, and that is all."

"What!" said Derville. "Did you not stipulate for an allowance?"

"Do not speak of it!" cried the old man. "You cannot conceive how deep my contempt is for the outside life to which most men cling. I was suddenly attacked by a sickness—disgust of humanity. When I think that Napoleon is at Saint-Helena, everything on earth is a matter of indifference to me. I can no longer be a soldier; that is my only real grief. After all," he added with a gesture of childish simplicity, "it is better to enjoy luxury of feeling than of dress. For my part, I fear nobody's contempt."

And the Colonel sat down on his bench again.

Derville went away. On returning to his office, he sent Godeschal, at that time his second clerk, to the Comtesse Ferraud, who, on reading the note, at once paid the sum due to Comte Chabert's lawyer.

In 1840, towards the end of June, Godeschal, now himself an attorney, went to Ris with Derville, to whom he had succeeded. When they reached the avenue leading from the highroad to Bicêtre, they saw, under one of the elm-trees by the wayside, one of those old, broken, and hoary paupers who have earned the Marshal's staff among beggars by living on at Bicêtre as poor women live on at la Salpêtrière. This man, one of the two thousand poor creatures who are lodged in the infirmary for the aged, was seated on a corner-stone, and seemed to have concentrated all his intelligence on an operation well known to these pensioners, which consists in drying their snuffy pocket-handkerchiefs in the sun, perhaps to save washing them. This old man had an attractive countenance. He was dressed in a reddish cloth wrapper-coat which the work-house affords to its inmates, a sort of horrible livery.

"I say, Derville," said Godeschal to his traveling companion, "look at that old fellow. Isn't he like those gro-

tesque carved figures we get from Germany? And it is alive, perhaps it is happy."

Derville looked at the poor man through his eyeglass, and with a little exclamation of surprise he said:

"That old man, my dear fellow, is a whole poem, or, as the romantics say, a drama.—Did you ever meet the Comtesse Ferraud?"

"Yes; she is a clever woman, and agreeable; but rather too pious," said Godeschal.

"That old Bicêtre pauper is her lawful husband, Comte Chabert, the old Colonel. She has had him sent here, no doubt. And if he is in this workhouse instead of living in a mansion, it is solely because he reminded the pretty Countess that he had taken her, like a hackney cab, on the street. I can remember now the tiger's glare she shot at him at that moment."

This opening having excited Godeschal's curiosity, Derville related the story here told.

Two days later, on Monday morning, as they returned to Paris, the two friends looked again at Bicêtre, and Derville proposed that they should call on Colonel Chabert. Halfway up the avenue they found the old man sitting on the trunk of a felled tree. With his stick in one hand, he was amusing himself with drawing lines in the sand. On looking at him narrowly, they perceived that he had been breakfasting elsewhere than at Bicêtre.

"Good-morning, Colonel Chabert," said Derville.

"Not Chabert! not Chabert! My name is Hyacinthe," replied the veteran. "I am no longer a man, I am No. 164, Room 7," he added, looking at Derville with timid anxiety, the fear of an old man and a child.—"Are you going to visit the man condemned to death?" he asked after a moment's silence. "He is not married! He is very lucky!"

"Poor fellow!" said Godeschal. "Would you like something to buy snuff?"

With all the simplicity of a street Arab, the Colonel eagerly held out his hand to the two strangers, who each gave

him a twenty-franc piece; he thanked them with a puzzled look, saying:

"Brave troopers!"

He ported arms, pretended to take aim at them, and shouted with a smile:

"Fire! both arms! *Vive Napoléon!*" And he drew a flourish in the air with his stick.

"The nature of his wound has no doubt made him childish," said Derville.

"Childish! he?" said another old pauper, who was looking on. "Why, there are days when you had better not tread on his corns. He is an old rogue, full of philosophy and imagination. But to-day, what can you expect! He has had his Monday treat.—He was here, monsieur, so long ago as 1820. At that time a Prussian officer, whose chaise was crawling up the hill of Villejuif, came by on foot. We two were together, Hyacinthe and I, by the roadside. The officer, as he walked, was talking to another, a Russian, or some animal of the same species, and when the Prussian saw the old boy, just to make fun, he said to him, 'Here is an old cavalry man who must have been at Rossbach.'—'I was too young to be there,' said Hyacinthe. 'But I was at Jena.' And the Prussian made off pretty quick, without asking any more questions."

"What a destiny!" exclaimed Derville. "Taken out of the Foundling Hospital to die in the Infirmary for the Aged, after helping Napoleon between whiles to conquer Egypt and Europe.—Do you know, my dear fellow," Derville went on after a pause, "there are in modern society three men who can never think well of the world—the priest, the doctor, and the man of law? And they wear black robes, perhaps because they are in mourning for every virtue and every illusion. The most hapless of the three is the lawyer. When a man comes in search of the priest, he is prompted by repentance, by remorse, by beliefs which make him interesting, which elevate him and comfort the soul of the intercessor whose task will bring him a sort of gladness; he purifies, re-

pairs and reconciles. But we lawyers, we see the same evil feelings repeated again and again, nothing can correct them; our offices are sewers which can never be cleansed.

"How many things have I learned in the exercise of my profession! I have seen a father die in a garret, deserted by two daughters, to whom he had given forty thousand francs a year! I have known wills burned; I have seen mothers robbing their children, wives killing their husbands, and working on the love they could inspire to make the men idiotic or mad, that they might live in peace with a lover. I have seen women teaching the child of their marriage such tastes as must bring it to the grave in order to benefit the child of an illicit affection. I could not tell you all I have seen, for I have seen crimes against which justice is impotent. In short, all the horrors that romancers suppose they have invented are still below the truth. You will know something of these pretty things; as for me, I am going to live in the country with my wife. I have a horror of Paris."

"I have seen plenty of them already in Desroches' office," replied Godeschal.

PARIS, *February–March* 1832.

